

# Mennonite Historical Bulletin

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## The Russian Mennonites in 1819

*This year marks the bicentennial of the Mennonite arrival in Russia. Mennonites were first enticed to Russia by the rich farmland and the promises from Czarina Catherine II of self government and religious freedom, including exemption from military service. In 1819, less than thirty years after arriving, they were visited by an American Quaker, Stephen Grellet, who gives us a rare account of an outsider's view of these early Russian Mennonites.*

*Grellet himself has a rare and interesting history. Born into a wealthy, upper-class, Roman Catholic, French family in 1773, he was forced to escape for his life due to his status and military resistance during the French Revolution in 1793. Upon his arrival in the United States, he became acquainted with some Quakers, and after a dramatic encounter with God, the "disciple of Voltaire" became a disciple of Christ. In 1796 he formally joined the Quakers. Part of his attraction to the Quakers was their belief in nonresistance and in simplicity, especially that of plain language, and their desire to seek truth. He often felt called to leave his family, church, and job to go witness to other people in North America and Europe. It is evident from his writings that while his task was to preach, he was also an astute observer of other faiths and at times able to discern truth from them. While on one of these evangelistic trips into Russia in 1819, he encountered some Mennonites.*

*Grellet had for his guide a seventy-year-old man, Contentius, who was superintendent of the colonies of Germans, Mennonites, and Duhobortzi in the Crimea. Contentius was invaluable in that he could speak French, German, and Russian, and was also sympathetic to these groups as Grellet relates:*

*"... From religious motives he has devoted the last thirty years of his life to endeavours to promote the well-being of the several colonies; he has been to them an instrument of much good, as Prince Alexander Galitzin told us; he does not act from motives of interest, but from principle." (p. 448)*

—J. Kevin Miller

Accompanied by dear Contentius we left Ekaterinoslav early in the morning of the 23rd [of the fifth month, 1819], for the colonies of the Mennonites, on the Dnieper; we came sixty-five versts to the chief village of the fifteen that form this part of their settlement; they are an interesting people; much simplicity of manner, and genuine piety appear prevalent amongst them. I felt my mind so drawn towards them in the love of Christ, that I apprehended it my duty to endeavour to have a religious meeting among them; their Bishop, who resides in this village

was sent for by Contentius to consult on the place and most proper time to hold the meeting; the dear man, who is very plain in his manners and way of living, was at the time in the field behind the plough; for neither he nor any of the clergy receive any salary. They maintain themselves and families by their honest industry. They are faithful also in their maintenance of their testimony against oaths, public diversions, and strong drink. The Emperor exempts them from military requisitions. The Bishop concluded that there was no better, or more suitable place than their meeting-house, which is large, and in the centre of the other villages; the time was fixed for the next day, and he undertook to have notice spread.

At the time appointed, they came from all the other villages; the house was crowded with people, and their ministers; much solidity was evinced. The people gathered at once into such stillness and retiredness of spirit, that it seemed as if we were amidst our own friends, in their religious meetings. I was enlarged among them in the Gospel of Christ; Contentius interpreted from the French into German; dear Allen had an excellent communication to them, which I first rendered into French, and then Contentius into German; we also had access together to the place of prayer; our spirits were contrited before the Lord; the dear children, who also felt the Lord's power over them, were in tears.

We went thence about thirty-five versts to Cortitz island, in the Dnieper, where we stopped awhile with Peter Hildebrand, one of their pious ministers; we had with him and his wife and family a refreshing season before the Lord. Then they accompanied us, in small boats, about eight versts down the river, to one of their villages below Aleksandroosk, where we had that evening a



Old Russian Woman—Babushka ("Grand-mother"). Doll made out of scrap materials by a Russian Mennonite refugee girl in a refugee camp in the Netherlands, ca. 1946. The Babushka has a bag, a bottle with typical stopper from paper, a stick to beat off the village dogs, and typical cloth rag shoes. From the Vernon and Evangeline Neuschwander Collection, Archives of the Mennonite Church.



large and satisfactory meeting. We felt much for concerned parents in that place; their young people are exposed by being so near a city of resort and temptations. Before we took our departure, the next morning, we had a tendering opportunity in the family, where also several others met us. Peter Hildebrand's heart was full in parting with us. We left with them, as we had done in the other villages, some of our books in German.

We then travelled sixty-five versts, over what is called a steppe, where not even a shrub grows, only coarse grass. That night we came to a village of German Lutherans, where are kept beautiful flocks of Merino sheep, for the use of thirty villages. We had some religious service, but we did not find much piety among them. Thence we went over the river called Moloshnaia, which divides the settlement of the German colonies from a settlement of the Mennonites, composed of twenty villages. We stopped at their first village, where they have a large cloth manufactory; their land is in high cultivation; formerly, not a tree or shrub was to be seen on their vast steppes; now they have fine orchards of various kinds of good fruit. Travelling over these steppes, we saw, as we thought, at a distance, large groves of beautiful trees, and to our astonishment, the scenery continually changes; at first it appeared as if the groves were in motion; on coming nearer, we found that they were flocks of cattle feeding. At other times we thought we saw large sheets of water, like lakes; but all this was an optical delusion, caused by the state of the air.

The Mennonites, here, are preserved in much Christian simplicity, in their worship, manner of living, and conversation. They have also a testimony against making the Gospel chargeable, and against wars and oaths. I felt it my religious duty to have a meeting amongst them. It was agreed to be held in the evening of the next day, and the Bishop readily offered to have notice of it sent to the

villages round,—ten in number.

In the forenoon we had a meeting with the children of several villages, collected on the occasion; their sobriety and religious sensibility give pleasing proofs that their parents have not attempted in vain to instruct them, by example and precept, in a Christian life. We also visited with much satisfaction several of their families. The meeting in the afternoon was largely attended. The Lord owned us by his Divine presence, and gave us an evidence that he has here a people, whom he graciously owns as members of his church. We afterwards went a few versts further, and lodged at an aged couple's; Christians, indeed, they appeared to be; we were much refreshed with them, in our bodies and spirits.

Next morning, we had another meeting with about five hundred of their young people. I have rarely met more general religious sensibility than among these. I had not spoken many sentences, when a great brokenness and many tears gave evidence of their religious feelings. In the afternoon we had a meeting with the people at large; a very satisfactory season. Dear Contenius is a faithful helper to us; he is so feeling in his manner of interpreting. After visiting many of these people in their families, we went to another village, where we had a very large meeting. Many of these dear people came to it from fifteen different villages round, their meeting house being large. It may be said to have been a holy solemnity; the Lord's baptizing power was felt to be over us.

We then went to Altona, their most distant village, which stands pretty near the colonies at the Duhobortzi. We put up at the house of a Mennonite, a young man, who is a minister among them. The order of his family and children is most gratifying; piety seems to prevail over them all; the simplicity and neatness of the house are beautiful. Much quietness and simplicity is also apparent in the religious meetings of this people.

They are very regular and punctual to the hour at which their meetings for worship are held. When gathered, they all kneel. They continue so in total silence, in secret meditation or prayer, about half an hour. After resuming their seats, their minister is engaged either in preaching or in prayer; both extempore. Before they separate they kneel down again, and continue for some time in silent prayer.

The Emperor grants them every privilege, and liberty of a civil and religious nature. They choose their own magistrates, and are not under the authority of the police of the Empire. This is exercised by themselves. They are exempt from military requisitions, and have no taxes, except those requisite among themselves, for their own government, and they are placed under the superintendence of those persons who preside over the colonies in the Crimea generally. Contenius is the chief person on whom that care now devolves.

**29th of Fifth month.** This afternoon we went to the principal village of the Duhobortzi; they inhabit several others near. We went to the abode of the chief man among them. He is ninety years old, nearly blind, but very active in body and mind. He appears to be a robust, strong man. Fourteen others of their elders or chief men were with him. We had a long conference with them. He was the chief speaker. We found him very evasive in several of his answers to our inquiries. They however stand unequivocally, that they do not believe in the authority of the Scriptures. They look upon Jesus Christ in no other light than that of a good man. They therefore have no confidence in him as a Saviour from sin. They say that they believe that there is a spirit in man, to teach and lead him in the right way, and in support of this they were fluent in the quotation of Scripture texts, which they teach to their children; but they will not allow any of their people to have a

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Mennonite settlements in South Russia, the area where in 1819 Stephen Grellet visited several Mennonite colonies. Map, courtesy *Mennonite Encyclopedia*.

Bible among them.

We inquired about their mode of worship. They said they met together to sing some of the Psalms of David. Respecting their manner of solemnizing their marriages, they declined giving an answer; but a very favourable reply to some of our questions, was, "the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." We found however that they have no stated times for their meetings for worship; but that tomorrow, which is First-day, they intend to have one, and this, they said we might attend and see for ourselves. We left them with heavy hearts and returned to Altona.

**First-day, 30th.** I had a sleepless night, my mind being under great weight of exercise for the Duhobortzi. I felt much for these people, thus darkened by their leaders, and I did not apprehend that I should stand acquitted in the Divine sight, without seeking for an opportunity to expostulate with them, and to proclaim that salvation which comes by Jesus Christ. It appeared best to go back to their village, and see what opportunity the Lord would open for it, after their meeting, whilst they are all congregated. My dear Allen and Contentius felt very tenderly with me on the occasion.

We rode again to their village in the morning; having previously appointed a meeting here among the Mennonites to be held in the after-

noon. The Duhobortzi collected, at about ten o'clock, on a spacious spot of ground out of doors; they all stood, forming a large circle; all the men on the left hand of the old man, and the women on his right; the children of both sexes formed the opposite side of the circle; they were all cleanly dressed; an old woman was next to the old man; she began by singing what they call a Psalm; the other women joined in it; then the man next the old man, taking him by the hand, stepped in front of him, each bowed down very low to one another three times and then twice to the women, who returned the salute; that man resuming his place, the one next to him performed the same ceremony to the old man, and to the women; then, by turns, all the others, even the boys, came and kissed three times the one in the circle above him, instead of bowing. When the men and boys had accomplished this, the women did the same to each other; then the girls; the singing continuing the whole time. It took them nearly an hour to perform this round of bowing and kissing; then the old woman, in a fluent manner, uttered what they called a prayer, and their worship concluded; but no seriousness appeared over them at any time.

O how was my soul bowed before the Lord, earnestly craving that he would touch their hearts by his power and love! I felt also much towards the young people. I embraced the opportunity to preach the Lord Jesus Christ, and that salvation which is through faith in him; "If ye believe not that I am He, (the Christ the Son of God,) ye shall die in your sins." I entreated them to try what manner of spirit they are of; for many spirits are gone out into the world; and "hereby know we the Spirit of God; every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is not of God; but this is that spirit of Antichrist," &c.

Whilst I was speaking, the old men appeared restless; but they invited me several times to retire to the house, but I could not do so until I had endeavoured to relieve my mind of the great concern I felt for them; many of the people were very attentive, and the Truth appeared to reach their hearts. We then went into the house with the old men; they had a few things to say, but not to any more satisfaction than yesterday. We left them with heavy hearts, and returned to Altona.

At five o'clock the meeting with the Mennonites began; it was very numerously attended; the people came from several other villages. O! what a difference in our feelings with this people and those we were with in the morning; then darkness encompassed us, but here was light, as in Goshen; the Lord's presence was over us; the stream of the Gospel of life and salvation freely flowed towards the various ranks in life; many in the assembly were contrited before the Lord, and under a sense of his redeeming love and presence we took a solemn leave of each other.

There are no post-horses to be had in these parts; we therefore hired one of the Mennonites to take us with his horses to Perekop. Early in the morning of the 31st, after a solemn and tendering opportunity in the family where we had been so kindly entertained, several others coming in also, we set off for a long journey through the wilderness. Contentius, who had become increasingly endeared to us, and whose services have been so valuable, accompanied us about ten versts on our way. At the entrance of the desert we took solemn leave of each other, under feelings of Christian love.

This desert or steppe extends all the way to Perekop and a great distance beyond, and to the right and left; the water is bad and brackish. Several lakes of salt water occur. Large herds of cattle, flocks of sheep, and many wild horses are met with on these steppes. Nature has bountifully provided for these animals; for, though fresh water is scarce, the dews are heavy in the night, so that the grass grows up to a considerable height; but not a shrub is to be seen. Water-melons of an excellent kind grow spontaneously, in great abundance, during the summer; man and beast find them a great luxury.

We now and then passed near some villages of the Tartars, but our carriage was our habitation night and day. We sometimes obtained a little milk, in addition to the provisions we had brought with us. One night we stopped near a small Tartar hut, at which other travellers rested. We found our company consisted of Tartars, Turks, Greeks, Russians, our attendant and interpreter who is a Pole, my companion an Englishman, and I a Frenchman.

A Mennonite, from Altona, overtook us in this wilderness; he was the



bearer of letters for us, which had arrived after our departure. One was from America, from my beloved wife; in ten weeks it had travelled from America to England, whence it was sent to Petersburg, then to Moscow, to Ekaterinoslav, then to several of the colonies on the Moloshnaia, and finally it came to hand in this desert.\*

\**Memoirs of the Life and Gospel Labours of Stephen Grellet*. Edited by Benjamin Seebohm. Vol. 1, 1860, pp. 452-58.

## Rural Topeka, Indiana, around 1900

by Velma Yoder Bowman

*It is not every person who can remember back to the turn of the century. And of those who still can, not very many are as articulate in memory, preciseness of detail, and awareness of feeling as is Velma Yoder Bowman. Her account of life in and around Topeka, Indiana, in the 1890s and early 1900s, is unusually rich in detail and in the spirit of the times. This account, reproduced in its entirety, was written in 1986, upon the request of her granddaughter Patti (how many such accounts never see the light of day, simply because there was no "Patti" to request "Mother," or "Grandfather" to put it down on paper or tape!).*

*From another autobiographical sketch, written in 1984 and presented to a women's fellowship meeting, the following two additional segments are significant enough to add to the larger picture.*

I was brought up on a farm, and learned to do hard work. It was before milking machines were much in use, before the time of power mowers, garden tractors, and I think I did my share in that area. Had a nice home, quite modern, but did not have electricity for quite some time. My parents were frugal as I think back. We mended and mended some things I think may have been ready to throw away. I remember my father saying when eggs were two cents apiece, "We don't eat them, we sell them." So that training came in handy when the depression came and money was very scarce. I didn't work

away from home but learned a good many times to get along with what I had and learned to save. A penny saved is as good as a penny earned.

When I was eleven my father built a new house and barn. We boarded the carpenters for dinner and supper. As I remember, there were around five or six with my father. The men ate first; then Mother and we girls would eat. And it was my job to do the dishes.

*Velma Yoder was born into a Mennonite family, and became baptized as a Mennonite. In 1921, when she married Galen Bowman, she became a member of the Church of the Brethren. Some of this larger story of her life may be found in her collection at the Archives of the Mennonite Church, in her own handwriting, as well as in the form of a taped interview that took place in July 1988.*

—Leonard Gross

I was born June 23, 1895, about a mile south of Topeka, Indiana, on the east of the road about thirty yards from the corner. My parents were Jacob S. Yoder and Libbie Hartzler Yoder. Before I was a year old we moved to the Hartzler Homestead a mile southeast of there where my Mother had grown up. We moved back to the place where I was born in the fall, after my fourth birthday. I do not remember too many things from my first four years. I faintly remember sleeping in a trundle bed in a small bedroom with my parents. Later I remember I had a larger bed with a railing around it. There was what we called a summerhouse just south of the main house, with a porch connecting the two houses. In the summertime some kitchen and dining equipment was moved to the summerhouse. Mother cooked there and we ate there. So, for the summer, we moved our beds to the kitchen of the main house. I can remember where my bed stood.

I can also remember what Mother fixed for my breakfast when I got up late. We had no electric, oil or gas stove. She would break up bread in a cup or bowl. She had a wire thing that could be folded down over a lamp chimney. She lit the lamp and set a small pan of water on the wire to heat. Mother poured the hot water over the bread and added some cream and a little salt. It made very good soup. I could enjoy that today with that good cream.

I recall one morning when I got up

late: My cousin Vernon Hartzler was repairing a screen door, and when I was coming out that door onto the porch I stepped on a tack.

My Uncle Andy Yontz told of an incident which I did not remember. I was probably three or four years old. He was at our place in the Hartzler home eating grapes at the arbor. I guess I thought he had eaten quite a few and there might not be many left. So I said, "Aren't you about full?" He said that his shoes were not full. He still kept on eating grapes. After a little while he said that I said, "Your shoes are full now."

The pump house was at one end of the porch. Some things like milk and butter were kept there to keep them cool. But that is a remembrance of later years—like the brick oven out by the garden fence where Grandmother Hartzler used to bake bread for her family.

I remember the coal stove we heated the living room with, and remember one evening, standing with my back to the stove and my father being amused at me while I imitated him with my hands behind my back, warming myself.

I think I can recall only one thing that happened the day we moved. A cousin who was just my age penned me in the smokehouse at the place where we had moved. I didn't like that. The smokehouse was where pork, hams and shoulders were smoked. The meat was rubbed with salt, brown sugar and saltpeter. There might have been another ingredient. I do not remember. After some time the meat was hung in the smokehouse and a fire built—in probably an old lard can—and fixed so it would smoke and smolder. I think it was later hung in the basement. It would keep all summer. Mother would slice and fry it.

There were no trees in the yard as I remember, and it must have been the next summer that Father planted several poplar trees. He got me a shiny pail to carry the water to water them. There was a windwheel that pumped the water when there was enough wind. There was a tank and lid that kept the water clean. There was another tank where the overflow went into, for the horses and cows. He sunk a tile by each tree for me to pour the water in. I was to pour several pails-full in each tile, which took the water down to the roots. I dipped my pail into the tank to fill it.



That did not seem too big a task for a little girl. And we looked forward to a shady lawn. But more about the trees. It seemed they shed their leaves all summer. I especially remember them accumulating around the back door and porch that joined the wood house. There was not much grass there. As I grew older that was my job, to clean them up.

The house we lived in was quite small. Wish I could see it today. Some years later Father used it for a tenant house. After he no longer needed it for that, he sold it to a man



Velma Yoder (Bowman), 9 years of age, with her sister, Iva, 4 years of age, to her right, ca. 1904.

who moved it to Marshall, Michigan. I can remember just about where everything stood when I was a little girl. In one corner of the living room was the organ that my mother had played when she was a young girl. There was a bay window. A stand stood in front of it. It had a lamp on it with a shader. Esther has it now and converted it to an electric lamp. A rocker stood on each side of the stand. There was a desk and bookcase in another corner. Between the desk and coal stove Mother had her sewing machine. It was toasty warm in that corner. I can remember Father putting in a scuttle of coal in the night, and shaking down ashes in morn and opening the damper. In front of another window was a couch.

The bedroom was small with room for my parent's bed, my bed with a railing around it, a cradle for my sister, who was born three months before my sixth birthday, and a

dresser. Later my bed and the cradle were replaced with a full-sized bed. There was a small closet under the stairway, and also hooks across part of one side of the room. We did not have as many clothes as people think they need now. I can still remember some of the dresses I had in those early years. Some photos tell me I had nice clothes. Mother made them. Grandma Hartzler may have helped too. As I remember she used to come and stay with us a couple of weeks at a time. She was widowed when Mother was seventeen.

Grandma and she continued to live in the Hartzler home. I think that was when Uncle Jonas and Aunt Fanny moved there and farmed the farm. Then later we lived there the years I mentioned. When we moved back to the little home, Aunt Cassie and Uncle Andy Yontz lived with her until she passed away at age 72 years.

When Mother would sew for my sister, Iva and I would often beg for a piece of the material. I had a small doll, maybe eight or ten inches tall. I would have visions of a beautiful dress I could make for my doll. I am sure my first attempts at sewing were a little crude, but they looked nice to me. Since I always wanted to sew, Grandma suggested Mother cut some quilt blocks for me. So she did. For one block she cut three pieces, each approximately five by two-and-a-half inches. The centers were all red in color and the outside ones on each block were alike. I can remember keeping my sewing in a shoe box and taking my work along when we went to Aunt Cassie's. I was not going to school yet when I sewed them. They were not put together until I was going to get married. I had to add just a few blocks to them to make enough for the quilt.

I had a larger doll with a china head and a rag body. I may have had more than one. I think I had a nicer doll as I grew older. I didn't have as many as some little girls have today but I think I appreciated what I had more than if I had had more. I remember one year getting a swing for my doll for Christmas. I think the same time I got a little trunk with Christmas candy in it. I could use the trunk to put my doll clothes in. I remember one time getting a little set of play dishes. I am sure I had blocks with the ABCs on them.

I remember my mother taught me a jingle to help me learn the alphabet.

I think that was before I went to school. I still remember it. This was it: "A was an apple pie, B bit it, C cut it, D divided it, E eats it, F fought for it, G got it, H had it, I and J jumped for it, K kept it, L longed for it, M mourned for it, N nodded at it, O opened it, P peeped into it, Q quartered it, R ran for it, S stole it, T took it, U and V viewed it, W wanted it, X Y Z and etcetera all wished for a piece in hand."

I took first and second grades in one year. When I got into the third grade I found it hard. Seemed I had forgotten a lot of what I had learned the first year. There was probably not enough in way of review. But I made the grade. The next grade got a little easier and by the time I was in the sixth grade I was doing good work. I graduated from eighth grade with an average of 94, completing elementary school in seven years. I think it would have been much better for me if I had had eight years in the grades.

Our graduating exercises were in La Grange. There was a man in Topeka, Dr. Reed, who offered to take some of us girls to the programs. I think four of us went with him. He had an auto, two-seated, no top. There were no improved roads then. We got stuck in gravel and all had to get out and push. We got there O.K. and had a great day.

But going back to the days in the little house: There was no indoor plumbing. There was a cistern pump near the back door where Father and hired help would wash up before coming in the house. In the winter there was a stand with a basin in the kitchen and a pail underneath where we emptied the basin.

The kitchen had a cook-stove in one corner, then there was a dry-sink with cupboard space below. There were two shelves where Mother kept our everyday dishes, and pots and pans. There was also space for food. In another corner was a cupboard built in the wall. There our best dishes were kept. In summer a built-in porch was used for a summer kitchen. The stove and sink were moved out there. We also by that time had a gasoline stove which we used part of the time. The dining area was not quite so hot when we did not need to cook in there.

Across the top of the sink were things like a coffee pot, coffee can, cracker jar and I don't know what else. When I was a little girl it was my



job to wipe those things off on Saturdays. I thought it a big job. Off one end of the kitchen was the cellar way which led to a small basement where we kept canned fruit, cans of lard, potatoes, and maybe a vinegar barrel. There was always vinegar in a jug in the cellar way. Butter and milk were carried to the basement because there was no refrigeration.

We had linoleum on the kitchen floor. I think on the living room and bedroom floors we had homemade carpet made from carpet rags out of clothes we did not wear anymore. Mother would cut or tear strips an inch wide or more, depending on the heft of the cloth, and then sew them together and roll into balls. Then she would take them to someone who had a loom and have carpet woven. She may have dyed some cloth to make stripes through the carpet or I think the warp used would help make stripes. I can remember going with her southeast maybe four or five miles to a place called "Hog Back" to get some woven. We went with horse and buggy. The rags were woven into strips about a yard wide. Then she sewed the strips together and Father would help take down the carpet clear around the edge of the room.

There were two bedrooms upstairs. Another thing I remember is having two barrels at the top of the stairs, one for crackers and the other one for sugar. For several years we had a hired girl when I was not old enough to help a lot, and Father always had a hired man. But even at that I don't see how we could use so much sugar and eat so many crackers. One hired girl got \$1.00 a week and I think the next one \$1.25 or \$1.50. They worked hard and I think they put in good time too. A dollar bought a lot more then than it does now.

When I was ten years old I accepted Jesus as my Saviour and was baptized in a creek just south of Emma Lake, north of Topeka. Then I remember a Sunday school teacher I had, perhaps a little later, who had meetings for us during the week. I don't remember too much about them. I learned how to lead the meetings, and lead in prayer. I suppose we took turns doing that and being on a program. My folks took me to church and Sunday school. I am glad for that heritage. I had a lot of faith in my mother's prayers. It was easy for her to express herself in

prayer. Father was a good Christian man but he found it a little more difficult. He had a prayer he had memorized which he always prayed at the breakfast table—with a few exceptions when it might be the Lord's prayer. I am thankful for their prayers and concerns for me as well as for my sister. My parents were both very frugal and hard-working and I owe a lot to them. I am glad for the memory of Christian aunts and uncles. Four of them were in the ministry.

My grandfathers both died before I was born, so I never knew them. I enjoyed my grandmothers. Grandmother Hartzler used to come and stay with us maybe a couple of weeks at a time. Grandmother Yoder lived in the Shipshewana area. We used to drive over to see her with horse and buggy occasionally. She passed away at 83 when our daughters were small. While I am thankful for all the influences of a Christian background, I could not rest on "Father Abraham." But I had to make my own choices. While I had this blessing I should have done much better. Sometimes I made mistakes and did not live up to my potential, but am sure it was a help.

After I had grown up I appreciated the fact that I had had the opportunity of attending school in Topeka rather than one-room schools in the country, and also that high school was so convenient for me. I knew of some girls that drove as far as five miles with horse and buggy, putting the horse in a livery barn for the day so they could attend high school. I lived near enough that I could walk in nice weather. My father, along with some other fathers a mile west of us and a little farther, built a hack—or had it built. It had long seats on each side facing each other. There were eight or nine families involved and as many as 20 children. So that made good transportation. They would hitch two horses to it and take turns driving it, I think a week at a time. When there was good sledding they would take a bobsled.

Sometimes in an evening when there was good sledding Father would hitch up two horses to a bobsled. He would put in nice clean straw to sit on, and robes and blankets to cover. Then we would take our close neighbors, Noah Yoders and daughter Edith, my special girl friend, and stop on the way and pick

up Uncle Enos and Aunt Allie and boys, Dana and Leland and maybe another family and go southwest three or four miles to our friends, Harley Yoders. Seemed like my father was always the one to furnish transportation. Maybe it was because he was the youngest. We would really glide over the snow with sleigh bells ringing. It was a lot of fun on a moonlit night.

My winter dresses were lined. Grandma knit my heavy black stockings. We wore high-topped shoes and boots. I remember I had a kitty hood which was nice and warm. We girls usually had scarves to put over our foreheads, crossed them in the back, brought them around in front and tied them. Then of course with long underwear, outing petticoats, lined dresses and heavy coats, I think we stayed reasonably warm. I cannot remember that I got cold.

I can remember my first automobile ride. Dr. Vaughn, Topeka, family physician, was the only person around owning a car. He caught up with me as I was walking home from Noah Yoders and he stopped and asked me to ride. What a thrill! It was a little car, likely one cylinder, going all of 15 miles an hour. It had no top and, as I remember, two seats back to back. When I got home I rushed into the house, saying, Dr. Vaughn has given me an automobile ride! My wildest imagination did not envision what would follow in the way of transportation: paved roads, conveniences in labor saving devices, 40, 50 or 80 years ahead.

Our medical supplies as I remember consisted of Quinine, castor oil, Brickel's liniment and a Brickel's stick. There was a man we called the Brickel's man who sold the Brickel's supplies. He drove through the country with horse and buggy and I can remember him staying at our home all night. I enjoyed listening to him and Father discussing affairs of the day. The Brickel's stick he sold was used to protect sores like a Band-Aid. Mother would hold the stick over a lighted lamp or burning match to soften and then rub it over a piece of clean white cloth and stick it over the sore. It would protect the sore until it healed. For a chest cold I can remember Mother greasing my chest with melted lard and turpentine and putting a wooden cloth over it. I think it was quite effective in break-



ing up a cold. What on odor!

We attended church and Sunday school in a small Mennonite church in the community. There was awhile when Mother was not too well and I can remember Father taking me to church on his bicycle. We had less than a mile. I can still remember a teacher I had when I was quite small. She would give us a little ticket with a picture on it to take home. When we had five or six tickets we took them back to church and she would give a bigger picture card to keep.

I can remember having to take much punishment. When we lived on the Hartzler place I can remember being locked in the main house while Mother was in the yard or maybe in the summerhouse. I don't know what I did but I must have been disobedient or naughty. It seems to me it had something to do with my table manners. I probably should have been punished sometimes when I did not get it. I think Mother was very strict with me as I look back.

Father had his slate which he had used in school. I would often bring the slate to him in the evening and beg him to draw me a picture. It was always the same picture: there would

be a house with smoke coming out of the chimney, and a barn, and also a boy halfway between the house and the barn. His hair stood straight up. I thought it was a nice picture.

Mother read stories to me which I enjoyed. Sometimes Father and Mother would both play hide the thimble with me. That was fun. Father was a great checker player. I never seemingly got interested in that. We used to guess names of people. We would give their initials and say whether they were boys or girls or men or women. Of course I was older then.

I had a playmate, Edith Yoder, who lived quite near us. We would go to each other's homes to play. We would usually get to stay several hours, usually from a short time after dinner to four o'clock. Sometimes we took our dolls along and played house or maybe with paper dolls. Often the paper dolls were just cut out of a magazine. When it was time for our guest to go home we could go with them always. There was a tree along the road about halfway between our homes and we could go as far as the little tree. Sometimes in the winter we would go with our parents to each other's homes to spend the evening. That was a fun time.

There were no puzzles to put together or all the boughten games that are available now. We had to make up our own entertainment. Sometimes our cousin who lived near would be at our home for the evening. While our parents visited we would play some games.

When I was older my sister and I got a croquet set. We enjoyed that. Skates and a sled furnished entertainment in winter.

When I was probably eight to ten years old there was a girl in Topeka who had a pony and cart and she would drive out by our place to the corner and then turn around and go back. I wanted a pony so badly and teased for one but I never got one. Father said it would be such a nuisance with the other horses. I thought if I just had a pony and cart that would be so wonderful.

When I was probably 10 or 11, eight of us Hartzler cousins went to Goshen to see our cousin, Vernon Hartzler, who had contracted tuberculosis. We went on the train (Wabash Railroad) to New Paris and took the Interurban from there.

Some of them were a few years older than I was. We did not have cars then yet. If we had made the trip with horse and buggy it would have taken three hours. We made the trip to Goshen to do shopping sometimes, or to Ligonier, six miles away. We could buy some dry goods in Topeka. Some items like coats we usually got in Ligonier. Occasionally we would go as far as Goshen for some items. Mother did some doctoring for an eye in Elkhart one summer. She would drive horse and buggy to Goshen and then take the Interurban to Elkhart. She had a closed tear duct. She went every week for a while as I remember.

I remember one day Mother and Edith's mother went to Goshen and maybe Elkhart too, and Edith and I got dinner for my father, the hired man, and carpenter, who were working on a new house for us, and maybe it was the barn, too. We had a new house and barn built in 1907. I think there were five men. They did not get back in time for supper so we prepared an evening meal too. We were 11 years old.

I'm sure I bossed my sister around quite a lot since I was quite a bit older than her. For me to tell it, I thought I was the good little girl and she was the one who got into mischief. She might have had a different story.

One day I remember she came up missing when she was about four. We called and called and looked everywhere we could think of. We even went to the pigpen. We thought she might have climbed up on the fence and fallen in where the sow was. Don't know if we thought we might find a little shoe or bonnet or part of her dress. Mother's washer was a washer with a tub with a cradle-like thing that fit inside with a long handle to rock back and forth that scrubbed the clothes. She had the tub tilted up against the woodhouse. After we had made a frantic search for Iva, she peeped out from under the washer. Mother was so relieved to find her in good condition that she did not get punished.

Another time she had climbed to the top of the windwheel that pumped our water. Aunt Ida was working for us that summer. She saw Iva up there. Ida didn't want to startle her so she said to her, "Hold tight, now put one foot down, now put the other one down," until she got her safely to the



Velma Yoder (Bowman), 15 years of age, ca. 1909.

ground. She was quite small and we were glad when she was safely on the ground. Just seems like I can see her yet in her red calico dress and her little red bonnet. Little girls must always wear their bonnets so as not to get tanned but to have a fair skin.

One time when she was just a baby she had wandered up the road and was sitting in the middle of the road. Mother saw her when a man came along in a buggy and picked her up. Mother went to the road and got her when the man got to our place.

—To be Continued

## Book Reviews

*Mennonite Stirrings in "America's Playland."* By Rosella Prater. Evangel Press, 1987. 115 pp. Paperback.

This book is a must for anyone who has interest or involvement in the Mennonite Church in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Written in a down-to-earth style with plenty of stories, tidbits of information, and pictures, all blended to tell the history of each congregation from the first seed of Mennonite presence in 1926. Based on the memories of the people who made this history, we get the firsthand account of events both great and small. For example, Germfask was so named for the first letter in the surname of the first eight settlers there. It is colorful tidbits like this that add to this factual non-interpretive history.

—J. Kevin Miller

## News and Notes

The Eleventh Annual Genealogy Conference of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society will be held Saturday, April 1, 1989, at the Lancaster Mennonite High School, 8:00 a.m. through the evening. Donald F. Durnbaugh will be keynote speaker, speaking on "Sorting out the Brethren"—(the historical background of the distinguishing features of various Brethren groups). For more details, write to Lola M. Lehman, L.M.Hist.Soc., 2215 Millstream Rd., Lancaster, PA 17602. Tel. (717) 393-9745.

## John Horsch Mennonite History Essay Contest Report

1987-88

### Class I (Graduate and Seminary)

**First:** (Tie Between) "The Imperishable Rock: Scripture and Truth in Daniel Kauffman's Doctrine Books," by Janeen Bertsche Johnson, (AMBS), and

"Menno Simons and Mennonite Church Ministers, 1957-1987," by Elwood E. Yoder, (EMS).

**Second:** "A Magic Lantern Show as Cultural Artifact: Silas M. Grubb's 'Slides on Mennonite History,'" by Lois Schlabach Driver, (Temple University).

**Third:** (Double Entry) "Mennonite Identity and the German-English Transition: A Sociological Analysis," and "Views of War and Nonresistance in the Old and New Testaments: Daniel Kauffman and George Brunk I," by Janeen Bertsche Johnson, (AMBS).

### Class II (College Juniors and Seniors)

**First:** "Partheyisch or Unpartheyisch?: Theological Themes in the Hymns of *Ein Unpartheyisches Gesang-Buch*," by Philip E. Stoltzfus, (Goshen College).

**Second:** (Tie Between) "Early Mennonite Houses in Goessel, Kansas: The Voth/Unruh/Fast House," by Kristine K. Flaming, (Bethel College), and

"Cornelius Herman Suckau: Mennonite Fundamentalist?" by Jeff A. Steely, (Bethel College).

**Third:** (Tie Between) "Mennonite Mutual Aid: Is it Still 'Mutual Aid'?" by Darryl Nester, (Bluffton College), and

"The Interaction Between Liberation Theology and Anabaptism," by Greg A. Wilson, (Bluffton College).

### Class III (College Freshmen and Sophomores)

**First:** (Tie Between) "John S. Coffman: Transformative Leadership," by Steve Nolt, (Goshen College), and

(Double Entry) "The Link Between War and Sexism," and "Peace and Anarchy," by Sonia K. Weaver, (Bethel College).

**Second:** (Tie Between) "Effects of the Constantinian Shift on Christology and the Nature of the Church," by Rita S. Schrock, (Bluffton College), and

"The Origins of Hutterianism," by Christopher M. Zimmerman, (Goshen College).

**Third:** (Tie Between) "Menno Simons' Christology: Theology of the Incarnation and Atonement," by Rita S. Schrock, (Bluffton College), and

"Hans Denk's Solution to the Problem of God and Evil," by Sonia K. Weaver, (Bethel College).

—Contest Manager, Leonard Gross



# Mennonite Historical Bulletin

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## What is Mennonitism?

by Edward Yoder

*It is time, once again, to look at dissent. North Americans seemed to be tiring of the voices of dissent in the seventies, perhaps with good reason—although the last word is not yet in, and dissent may well have worked its message, bringing about an earlier end to the Vietnam conflict than otherwise might have been the case.*

*Be that as it may, dissent was part of the core of our Anabaptist way, from the time of the 1520s, and throughout the four-and-more centuries of our existence since then as a people.*

*Is it still a part of our Mennonite mindset, in 1989? The article, herewith reproduced, was published over forty years ago in an obscure volume, Proceedings of the Second Annual Conference on Mennonite Cultural Problems, 1943, pp. 106-12. The author, Edward Yoder, was one of our leading Mennonite thinkers at that time, whose writings continue to speak to us today—both in style and content.*

*And to be sure, Yoder sees dissent, correctly understood and worked out, as an essential element for maintaining our way of life. Indeed, an awareness of dipping from different waters is of the essence of Anabaptism and Mennonitism, Yoder believed; how best to maintain such an awareness in any given generation lies at the heart of Yoder's persuasive argument.*

—Leonard Gross

Compared with the total body of Christendom, Mennonites in respect to numbers are, and have been, only an insignificant minority. Though their origin dates from nearly the same time as that of the oldest of the Protestant denominations, most of these denominations have long since outstripped the Mennonites in numbers. Many religious bodies younger in point of years have also far surpassed our total size in numbers. If numbers were to be taken as the criterion of success and accomplishment, then it would have

to be admitted that Mennonitism can hardly be regarded as a successful and going concern. As Christian denominations go, Mennonites make a poor outward showing in view of the length of their history.\*

If Mennonitism has a legitimate reason for its existence after these four hundred years, that reason must be sought in other directions than that of outward size and numbers. If now we happened to be earnest devotees of the popular American god, Bigness, we might have reason to feel inferior and apologetic for be-



**Peter Waldo, a medieval dissenter, who around A.D. 1177 gave away his property and founded a "heretical" movement, similar in nature to the later Anabaptists of the sixteenth century. Although no direct lines of continuity from the Waldenses to the Anabaptists have been documented, the similarities between the two groups are remarkable, leading many scholars over the centuries to assume some sort of (indirect) connection.**

ing Mennonites. But if we are among the proverbial seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to this American Baal, the false god, Bigness, because we are convinced that some other things besides mere size are of real value, we should be able to give convincing reasons for the existence and perpetuation of this tiny minority group of Christians.

It should be possible for us to speak honestly regarding the function and value of minority groups in society without being guilty of merely compensating for an inferiority complex, and also without fostering any superiority complex. The world has always benefited from the disturbing and generally unwelcome services of its dissenting minorities, especially in the fields of religion, morals, and ethics. Such minorities are often unappreciated, yet not infrequently they have been the standard bearers of higher and more spiritual ideals. They have in many instances blazed trails in moral and spiritual life that were destined to become highways of blessing to masses of people. Instances could be cited where individuals or small groups who advocated truths which contradicted the accepted beliefs of the time were put to death as dangerous heretics. Our own Mennonite ancestors testified and died for certain scriptural principles of truth and right which have since been widely recognized and adopted by others. One thinks of such principles, for instance, as the

\*There are a variety of ways in which one might look at the question: What is Mennonitism? Different individuals will no doubt suggest differing answers to the question. The answer attempted in this brief paper is only one among these. Others must judge as to the relative importance and validity of this answer. This discussion is presented in the hope that it may be of some help toward the formulation of the complete answer to the question.



separation of church and state, the freedom of conscience and of worship, and others. For holding such beliefs, people were once punished as heretics. They testified with suffering and martyrdom for truths which later came to be recognized as such.

But the minority people who suffered and died thus, because they lived several centuries before their time, scarcely had any intention of reforming the world. The burden that lay on their souls was the duty to obey God and to satisfy their conscience in so doing. They were for the most part sensitive souls who heard speaking within them the stern voice of conscience and duty to live by the will of God as revealed to humanity. They saw a vision of obedience and loyalty to the Christ they loved, a vision which allowed them not to rest and be comfortable on the low moral and spiritual level with the majority of their compatriots. There was in them the irresistible urge to press on toward a far-off goal, to live for higher purposes, and in the words of a scripture writer to seek for a city whose builder and maker is God. The "hounds of heaven" were verily on the heels of these high-minded souls.

Religious history through the centuries affords numerous instances of adventurous souls who not only dreamed of better things but who bravely set out to live for higher ideals than the majority of people ever even dreamed of. They were misunderstood by their fellows. Sometimes they are referred to condescendingly as perfectionists, as though it were a fault to live for the best that one knows, or to try to obey Jesus when he calls upon people to be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect. Not seldom these dissenters were persecuted for their efforts to follow the call of God that lay upon their souls.

One of the earliest of these sensitive souls, these restless dissenters from the prevailing culture of his time and place, was a man named Abraham in Ur of Chaldees. In the Scriptures he is portrayed as the great

hero of faith. He is designated the spiritual ancestor of all such as live in dissent from their surroundings and seriously seek to live for God. For what is this faith but a dissatisfaction with things as they are and a determination to follow the call of God to something better. Later one reads of others, of prophets and seers, of the unnamed and unsung seven thousand in Israel who pursued the far-off ideal when most of their kith and kin were well satisfied with the gross and worldly things that were right at hand. In the writings of the Old Testament prophets there is frequent mention of a 'remnant,' which no doubt signified the spiritual minorities that persisted in seeking God when most people were content with themselves and with things as they were.

In Christian history there are illustrations of earnest souls bent on the same quest for the will of God. The original Christian fellowship was long sifted and refined through persecutions. Christians were themselves a minority in the pagan empire. Later this fellowship became highly diluted with the admission to the church of multitudes of people who experienced no conversion or knew any vital religious faith. Then the moral and spiritual tone of Christendom sank rapidly to low levels. In this denatured fellowship and atmosphere the earnest and spiritually sensitive souls could not feel at home or at ease. They were impelled to withdraw from the worldly atmosphere of the religious life that was dominant at the moment and to seek for fellowship with God on a higher plane. Their conscience did not allow them to be at ease with things as they were.

In the early Christian centuries those souls who felt thus impelled by conscience and the call of God to withdraw themselves from this diluted and compromised Christendom frequently resorted to the desert, where in a very unnatural way of life they sought the deeper spiritual life which they craved. Their protest

against worldly and unspiritual conditions in the church took the form of extreme asceticism and self-abnegation and isolationism.

In the Middle Ages the institution of monasticism grew up within the folds of the Catholic Church itself as a place of refuge for the spiritually sensitive souls who heard the call of God to live a holy life, a life of dissent and protest against the prevailing low standards of faith and life in the church. Monks and nuns formed themselves into separate communities for the cultivation of spiritual life. This too was an unnatural way of life and developed many abuses in course of time. Yet at its best it represented the quest of earnest Christian souls for a higher level of personal obedience to God.

Certain groups of dissenters and nonconformists also existed outside the fold of the Catholic Church during the Middle Ages. These were treated as heretics and persecuted for their faith. For the most part their reasons for dissenting from the dominant church was the desire to obey God and to satisfy their conscience with a purer and more spiritual type of Christian life and testimony. Among these persecuted groups were such sects as the Montanists, Donatists, Albigenses, Waldenses, Bohemian Brethren, and others. They carried forward the torch of the high and holy ideal of living for God. They kept up a living protest against the unspiritual and worldly life of the mass of Christians of their time.

One outstanding example of personal consecration to the task of following Christ in his way of life is Francis of Assisi, who lived in Italy early in the thirteenth century. He perhaps embodied the desire to follow literally in the footsteps of Christ more fully than did anyone else. He brought the monastic ideal out of the monastery into the streets and into the countryside. He literally practiced poverty as well as love and nonresistance in imitation of Christ. He devoted himself to a life of service and healing and helping. He adopted

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Pilgram Marpeck, (d. 1556), one of our spiritual ancestors who exercised his dissent in word and deed. Painting by Ivan Moon (courtesy, Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pa.).

a severe and ascetic way of life as his expression of the determination to follow Christ. His influence was far-reaching. A recent writer has intimated his opinion that the severe simplicity in life and costume practiced by Mennonites and Amish owed part of its initial inspiration to the influence of St. Francis of Assisi.

With the coming of the Reformation in the sixteenth century an attempt was made in different places by the reformers to restore the pristine purity of the church in respect to doctrine and life. But for reasons of practical expediency the leading reformers, Luther and Zwingli, compromised short of the ideal of a New Testament church. And again there were numerous souls who saw the heavenly vision of the *Imitatio Christi*, the imitation of Christ, and felt the call of God to commit themselves to the task of walking in the way of Christ. They were the Swiss Brethren and others whom they influenced. They were the evangelical Anabaptists whom we rightly regard as our own spiritual ancestors. John Horsch in his last book showed clearly that the rise of the Swiss Brethren was immediately due to the compromising policy of Ulrich Zwingli as his work of reform at Zurich developed.

Mennonitism can therefore rightly

be viewed as a segment of the historic movement of dissent from the compromised forms of Christendom. It stands out as the real protestant movement among Protestants themselves. Its presence and testimony through the centuries is a standing rebuke of all accommodations and adaptations which Christian churches have thought necessary to make in the name of realism and practicalism and expediency. May we not be permitted to think of Mennonitism as the objectification of the call of God to men and women to obey him? May its task be that of making Christendom and the world conscious of Christ's rightful authority to rule the lives of men and women? The world needs not only to be told of their duty to obey God, but it needs to see the actual embodiment of this call in a way and a type of individual and group life which arrests attention and to some degree compels men and women to think of God and of his claims on their obedience.

A leading sociologist of our time has described what he terms "the crisis of our age." After diagnosing the sickness of the present phase of western civilization, he suggests that it is perhaps already approaching its overripe stage. He holds that if its grosser sensate elements could be replaced with vital spiritual elements, then our prevailing democratic civilization might yet be preserved for the time to come. Is it possible that Mennonites and other dissenting groups with their long tradition of protesting against things as they are have a historic commission from God to protest effectively in this day against this sensate culture which seems to be disintegrating before our eyes? With their historic experience of dissent behind them, Mennonites, if they have not already acquiesced too far in the sensate culture of the age, should by their concerted group testimony do much to make people conscious of God in a new and vital way. And this perhaps not so much through preaching and propaganda as through maintenance of a way of life that is distinctly aloof from the sinful features of the present cultural crisis.

The dominantly secular spirit of our day in education, in literature, and even in religion, the gross materialism in science and economics, the selfish worldly

outlook upon life in general, need to be vigorously challenged not in learned treatises and theoretical discussions but rather in concrete expressions through a radically different way of life. The general society must be brought face to face with the call of God to obey him and do his will. The preaching and writing of idealists has failed to stem the tide of sensate and godless culture which has swept away spiritual values for multitudes of men and women. Possibly the living embodiment of the principle of doing God's will and following in the footsteps of Christ would serve in some measure to show men and women a way out of the present crisis.

It is significant that in recent years the culture and life of the so-called plain sects of eastern Pennsylvania have been receiving increased recognition and evaluation from careful students of sociology and economics. Where once these people were perhaps regarded as curious survivals from a long distant past, and as proper subjects for enlightenment and Americanization, they now command the growing respect of thoughtful persons who are beginning to sense the failures of a purely sensate culture. In a volume printed just a year ago a writer says this:

"If when you next see an Amishman with broadfall trousers and hook and eye shirt, bearded face, and flat hat as distinguishing parts of his attire, you remind yourself that here is a man who wears a uniform as a protest against the wickedness of this world; if the next time you see a trimbonneted Mennonite lass, with a wisp of a white cap on her head, you think of her as a picket of heaven protesting against the inconsistencies of this world, you will begin to understand the unique contribution to the pattern of democracy that these logical-minded Germans are weaving into the life of our nation. That the house Amish do not have any church buildings of their own is a protest against what one modern Roman Catholic writer called the greatest danger confronting the church today, ecclesiastical materialism.

"So, when you drive through the plain people's country of eastern Pennsylvania, you should think of them as logical-minded Germans utterly convinced that Christ meant people to live peacefully and happily together. To this end all their unique dress is a protest, their vehicles a testimony, and many everyday habits of life a demonstration. These supposed eccentricities are deliberately adopted



uniforms whose end is to proclaim that the Christian is dedicated to an ideal society. . . . [whose] life must be utterly different in quality than that which leads the world into blood baths every generation."

This picture may be idealized a bit too much, nevertheless it shows that among some outsiders there is a growing conception of what this dissenting way of life is all about. Some at least do not hesitate to speak of these dissenting minorities as islands of sanity in an ocean of insanity.

In such a critical time as this, Mennonites and other dissenting bodies have before them particularly large opportunities for making living protests against the sinful features of a sensate culture. Through refraining from participation in wars and through sacrificing themselves for the healing of the world's sickness and wounds, they constitute themselves a standing rebuke to such ways of life as lead to suicidal wars. Against a capitalistic system which today seems able to prosper only when producing goods for war and destruction, Mennonites must make their protest with a way of economic life that embodies mutuality and cooperation in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ. In a world where animal comforts and worldly freedoms are emphasized as the most important values to fight for, Mennonites should be a living protest to the fact that humanism and materialism are cold stones for satisfying the hunger of the human heart, and that Christ and spiritual values are the bread which men and women need to live by.

### Postscript

*A paragraph from Edward Yoder's journal reads like a 1980s postscript to the above essay—although it was written half-a-century ago, in 1931 (published in Edward, Pilgrimage of a Mind: The Journal of Edward Yoder, 1931-1945, edited by Ida Yoder, 1985, pp. 57-58. Copies still available at \$20.00 plus postage from MHB offices.) This quote, below, serves as a fitting and eloquent example of how dissent can find its creative realization in the world of science, and the arts.*

—L. G.

## Rural Topeka, Indiana, around 1900

by Velma Yoder Bowman

(second, of two parts)

I remember when Mother quit baking bread because Father said it was cheaper to buy it than bake it. At the bakery in Topeka we could get five small loaves for fifteen cents, or three larger ones at the same price. By weighing them they decided that the latter was the better buy. They were round loaves and of course not sliced, and did not have wrappers like we have today. The clerks wrapped them in plain white wrapping paper. We kept them in a tin bread box. I don't remember that the bread dried out.

We always had butter to put on our bread and also made apple butter in the summer so I think we most always had that spread on hand. That work started the night before. Apples were peeled with an apple peeler, then cored and sliced. I think we would get a couple bushel or more of sliced apples. I am not sure but it may have been a cooperative affair where a neighbor or aunt and uncle helped furnish some of the ingre-

dients and divided the finished product. A large copper kettle was hung over a fireplace somewhere in the yard away from the house. Apples and cider had to be cooked and sugar was added. I don't know amounts. The fire had to be kept up and the apple butter stirred continuously with a long-handled wooden stirrer. It probably took as much as six hours of cooking and stirring. I know it took at least two people to make it. When it was near the finishing point they would take a small portion out on a saucer to let it cool to see if it would be thick enough. They took it off the fire, putting a pole under the handle. They dipped it into gallon jars with a long-handled dipper. When the jars were cool enough to handle they were carried to the basement, and paper was tied over the top of them. The apple butter kept a long time.

Mother made jelly too. As I remember, it was blackberry or raspberry jelly. That was mostly for company. I can remember our family

[There is a] definite delimitation of the human mind, and of the resulting corollary, that to make human reason and intelligence the final measure and tribunal of truth is unsafe. Amid the multiplied knowledge of our time, it requires the effort of a lifetime to master one field of knowledge or one particular viewpoint. It is practically impossible that there will be another Aristotle who will synthesize for us once more all knowledge into a dynamic system of thought. The field is too vast. Nevertheless each age has as its intellectual atmosphere a phase of prevailing philosophy which colors and influences all thinking. Of the influence of the current philosophic mode or fashion no one can be entirely free; at the same time it seems clear that to keep an independent viewpoint, to develop a critical attitude toward modes of thoughts, would give one a truer perspective, a perception of truth that is nearer cor-

rect than is possible for those who are completely "sold" on the current mode. As Mennonites, with four and perhaps more centuries of nonconformist blood running in our veins, with traditions that are more or less radical and independent, we should be in a position to contribute something constructive to the stream of the world's thought—not to reform and direct this stream, but to do a small bit of good in that direction. To this end some few should dedicate themselves to the enormous and lifetime task of getting an understanding of world literature, history, and thought, of developing a style of expression, and of interpreting to the world at large the ideas and ideals that are our heritage. Too many in the past have cast off their heritage after the first or second draught of learning. Others, to arm themselves against such an issue, have adopted the closed-mind attitude.



taking horse and buggy 10 to 15 miles to go to a marsh to pick huckleberries. It seemed Father could pick the most berries.

I can remember Mother and Grandma making soft soap over an outdoor fireplace in a much smaller iron kettle than the one used in making apple butter. I don't remember too much about it. Ashes were saved and put in a barrel away from the buildings. They were used some way in the soap. Strong meat fryings were also used and maybe some cans of lye. I don't know if there were other ingredients of not. I recall Mother also made bar soap, sometimes. I know it was thin and she would pour it into dripping pans and while it was hardening she would cut it into bars. It was used in laundering clothes. The soft soap was used to brush on the outside of kettles used in cooking. To speed cooking she would set the iron kettle directly over the fire, taking the stove lid off. It was quite easily washed off.

Washing was a big chore in those days. Bar soap was shaved into a copper boiler set on the stove. White clothes were boiled 20 or 30 minutes. Clothes were taken out of the boiler and put in a hand washer—sometimes in a tub and rubbed on the washboard. They were also rinsed in two waters. Some women had hand-wringers but some had to wring them by hand.

Butchering was another big day. It was usually done in early winter. My folks probably butchered two or three fat hogs. I can remember my uncles living near us coming early in the morning to get an early start. They

would build a fire under two big kettles to heat the water to scald the hogs after they were killed. They were hung up and scraped and the entrails taken out. Then it was time for the women to come with pails or dish pans to get the casings to clean them. They would take them to the garden or back some place. They had a way of turning them wrong side out to empty them. It seemed to me that was really a task to clean the casings. They were scraped on a board with a knife. Of course they used a lot of water and they looked white and clean when they got through with them.

Most everybody had a summer house or shop, where they would maybe put long boards on trusses on which they could cut up the meat. Meat from the head was cut off, ears were scraped and cleaned. This meat, with livers and maybe hearts, was put on the stove to cook, and then ground with a grinder. It was seasoned and put into crocks and roasted in the oven. When cooled, melted lard was poured over it. That was what we called headcheese. It was good on fried mush.

Tenderloins were sliced and put into small crocks or dishes and melted lard poured over them. It kept quite a while in a cool place. It was some of the meat used first. Of course there were hams and shoulders to be cured and smoked.

Most of the rest of the meat was cut up and ground for sausage. Of course there was a grinder turned by hand for that purpose and also a sausage stuffer. I liked to watch the sausage stuffing. Those casings—a few at a

time—were stripped onto a pipe-like thing and when they turned the crank it filled the casings with ground sausage. We probably had a couple large dishpans full. This was put in gallon crocks and put in the oven to roast and then when cooled, melted lard was put on it. But that was another day.

In later years Mother canned sausage and ribs and processed the cans. When the men were cutting up the meat they put the chunks of fat together in a container. Also there were sides of bacon to be smoked. The fat was put in a large kettle over the fireplace and rendered, and I think they strained it and put it in five-gallon lard cans. We would get probably two or more cans. Usually we had enough for a year. It was used for baking and frying.

As I remember we took our milk to the creamery, I suppose, every morning but Sunday during the summer months. The creamery was less than a mile away. I can remember riding along with Lizzie, our hired-girl, with horse and open buggy. We got paid according to weight and butter fat. I think my folks kept three or four cows at that time.

Mother raised some chickens. She would have some hens that wanted to set in the spring of the year. She would fix a nice nest for them and give them 12 or 15 eggs. She would have several hens setting. So we would have little chickens to raise. In around three weeks there would usually be some chicks ready to come out of the shell. I was fascinated when I would go with her to see how they were doing. They would pick the shell and Mother would break away part of the shell if it seemed they needed help. Sometimes there would be a third or more already hatched. Then she would usually put them in a little box and take them in the house and keep them covered with a warm cloth by the kitchen stove until the rest hatched.

When all the eggs hatched that Mother thought were going to hatch she would tie the hen to a coop or maybe a tree or fence and give her the chicks. When the chicks got older she usually let them roam at will. By August or fall we could have fried chicken. She usually had some to sell and some to add to her laying flock. One time I got a few Banty eggs and put them under a setting hen. I think that I got six Banties. I put them in a



"After we moved into the new house [in 1907] my father bought a new piano." (L. to r.): father, Jacob S. Yoder; sister, Iva; mother, Libbie. (Photo taken in the summer of 1917.)



pasteboard box. I thought they were so cute and I handled them so much that by night they were all dead.

I recall a time our Sunday school gave to each child that wanted to participate a quarter to invest in a setting of eggs. Then the money we got from the chickens we raised we gave to the church for missions. We had a mission in India.

Iva and I had the childhood diseases like chicken pox and measles. There were no shots to ward off diseases then. I guess I brought them home from school and Iva got them from me. We never had whooping cough. I suppose we had the doctor but I don't remember him calling at our place when I was a little girl.

I took a few music lessons on the organ we had. I was supposed to practice an hour every day. That is a long time for a little girl to practice. I am sure I did not apply myself too well at times. After we moved into the new house my father bought a new piano. Iva and I took several terms of lessons during the summer months. We did not take lessons during the winter with few exceptions.

Some more early recollections are: when my father attended the World's Fair at St. Louis; our family, along with friends, taking an excursion trip to Benton Harbor; of getting a phonograph and our first telephone; and when the folks and Iva went to Ohio and Pennsylvania to visit relatives.

I remember meeting my father at the Wabash Depot in Topeka on a Sunday afternoon when he came home from the World's Fair. We walked; it was only one-half mile. He brought me a mug with my name on it and also the year 1904. I still have it in my possession.

When we went on that excursion we must have gone to New Paris with horse and buggy or by train and then the Interurban to Goshen, Elkhart, and an Interurban to Michigan.

When I was quite young Mother belonged to a Larkins Club. She took orders from friends for things like laundry soap and other staple supplies. She could get various premiums for different sized orders. I remember this: one time she got a phonograph and some records. I was thrilled by that.

I don't know what year we got our telephone. But I am sure it was when we lived in the little house. We were on a party line and we knew the rings

of all the neighbors on our line. I remember Central ringing one long ring late each evening which was meant for everybody on the line and we would hear the weather report for the next day.

There were no daily papers—at least we did not take any, no radios or TVs. We took a farm paper or two. I think we took Farm Journal, Successful Farming and also the Sugar Creek Budget. The Budget, a weekly, was edited in Sugar Creek, Ohio. It had news in it from Mennonite settlements as far west as Wisconsin, and I think as far east as Maryland. My parents knew people in Pennsylvania and Ohio. So occasionally my father would get news from them in the Budget. My father had an aunt who lived in Kansas or Missouri. That was probably a way he heard from her family. There may have been interesting editorials in the paper too.

I am sure there was some value to the simple life we had then and I am glad for the experiences of those days even though I would not want to go back to them today.\*

\*[A few errors crept into the first part of this autobiography, published in the January 1989 MHB. These are important enough to note, here. Page 5, column 2, second full paragraph, lines 1 and 2, should read: "When Mother would sew for my sister Iva and me, I would often beg for a . . . ." P. 6, col. 1, last 2 lines of first full par., should read: "would help tack

down the carpet clear around the edge of the room. . . ." P. 7, col. 1, first full par., last 2 lines, should read: "back to church and she would give us a bigger picture card to keep." P. 7, col. 1, 2nd. full par., should begin: "I cannot remember having to take much punishment. When we lived on . . . ." P. 7, col. 2, 2nd. full par., lines 10-12, should read: "catalog. When it was time for our guest to go home we could go with them part of the way. There was a tree along . . . ." P. 7, col. 2, 3rd. full par., line 5, should read: "Sometimes our cousins who lived near . . . ." MHB regrets these errors.]

## Book Reviews

*The Amish School.* By Sara E. Fisher and Rachel K. Stahl. Good Books: Intercourse, Pennsylvania, 1985. Pp. 96. \$3.95. Paperback.

Amish schools gained their greatest impetus in the 1960s and 70s in response to a nationwide move to consolidate the public schools. While rural one-room elementary public schools posed little threat to the Amish community, consolidation meant new schools in nearby towns and cities requiring massive bussing to and from school. Large urban schools in modern buildings using the newest techniques in teaching and learning present a religious and cultural dilemma for nearly every Amish community in America.

Amish schools exist today primarily to prepare children to earn an honest living and lead a simple Christian life. More specific goals emphasize God-fearing, hardworking and self-supporting persons who will take their rightful place in the Amish community. Children who become too ambitious or move into competitive and self-seeking jobs are reminded of their humble servant role as stressed among the Amish. The simple one-room schools do not teach a lot of religion, although, the Bible is read and the Lord's Prayer said. Parents want the Bible taught and interpreted only in the home and church.

One of the real keys to the success of the Amish schools is the degree of parent support and involvement. Parents not only donate the land and construct the building, they make spontaneous visits to see their children's education in action. Teachers receive full support on such factors as assigned school work and in the ever-present issue of child behavior in the classroom. Schools are governed by an elected all-male board which has the sole power to hire the Amish teacher and otherwise



Velma Yoder (Bowman), country school teacher, in 1918, at 23 years of age.



run the school.

Amish schools develop their own curriculum within the basic requirements of the state. Subjects taught are of a practical nature and are selected on the basis of what is considered to be morally wholesome. The curriculum is almost completely void of modern technological and scientific concepts. Library books, as well as textbooks, are carefully screened, sometimes cutting out offensive pages or pictures, before such materials reach the hands of the children. Many Amish schools use the basic reading series, a compilation of suitable stories for Amish children, printed by Pathway Publishers.

*The Amish School* is co-authored by Sara E. Fisher and Rachel K. Stahl. Both authors write with authority and complete insight into what Amish schools are about. The reader is reminded of the co-authorship in nearly every chapter—something that becomes a bit redundant.

A special feature in the book is the Diary of an Amish Schoolgirl. Carefully outlined here is the day to day operation, including the fact that no Amish teacher was available and a Catholic woman took over the classroom. Special schools for the handicapped child is another feature that is relatively new for the Amish school system. Learning to teach these children without professional help or diagnostic analysis of a student's learning disability creates a real challenge for the special education teacher.

*The Amish School* is profusely illustrated with photographs in and out of school, something generally frowned on by the Amish. The authors share first-hand experience, and give sensitive and sympathetic reassurance that Amish schools do indeed meet the goals and purposes for which they were founded. Amish schools present a pattern of education reminiscent of the one-room prairie school of a half-century ago, but hardly a model for a nation's survival in a highly technological society based on invention, and scientific research and development. To be innovative and provide leadership for today's public and private schools, is not a high priority among the Amish. In this context, the authors do an excellent task in sharing the Amish school story.

—S. L. Yoder, Goshen College.

*Anabaptist Hymnal*. Ed., Clarence Y. Fretz. Privately printed, 1987. Order from: Deutsche Buchhandlung, Route 6, Box 327, Hagerstown, MD 21740. Pp. 151. Music, maps. \$9.00, hard cover; \$5.95 paperback (postpaid).

Many people have wondered why so few of the classic Anabaptist and Mennonite hymns are sung today. Part of the answer lies in the fact that translation work is a most difficult art—especially in view of the fact that the German language rhyming patterns are so much easier to discover than is the case in the English language.

The most recent and heretofore best attempt at gathering all known Anabaptist hymns that already have been translated is the volume at hand. Indeed, Clarence Y. Fretz, as editor, has commissioned individuals such as the late Martin E. Ressler to add to the known repertoire.

The result adds up to 122 hymns, arranged into 27 categories, including, for example: "Christ," "True Repentance and Faith," "Baptism on Confession of Faith," "True Church of God," "Love and Nonresistance," and "Mercy of God."

The hymns are in four-part harmony, and the edition is in shaped notes. The original writers are not all Anabaptist or Mennonite; some additional hymns are included which had found favor with German-speaking Mennonites over the decades.

A *Teacher's Guide to the Anabaptist Hymnal*, along with a *Handbook to the Anabaptist Hymnal* are currently in preparation, to be published later this year.

This rich volume of hymns is the result of years of research, and the fine-tuning of many of the 122 hymns, on the part of editor Fretz. It will become a fine companion volume to the Mennonite Hymnal for individuals as well as congregations.

—Leonard Gross

*Youth Movement to Bruderhof*. By Annemarie Arnold nee Wachter. Rifton, New York: Plough Publishing House. 1986. 234 pages. \$6.95.

This book consists of the letters and diaries of a very articulate young German woman from 1926 to 1932. The Foreword is supplied by one who

knew her well and the Introduction, titled "Annemarie's Search for Reality" by the editors, provides the biographical context which these materials need. It is noteworthy that her family kept these letters for over fifty years when Annemarie's decision to join the Society was such a disappointment to them. In these pages her struggle to find herself and her life purpose lives again.

From these letters we get only an oblique glimpse of the youth movement that arose in Germany following the First World War. This movement captivated and stimulated Annemarie into the deeper thinking that ultimately led her out of her nominal Protestantism and into a passionate conviction for the Christian communalism of the Society of Brothers.

Annemarie early became acquainted with Emy-Margret Arnold, the daughter of the founder of the Bruderhof. This acquaintance soon became a firm friendship that developed during the days of their training in child care. During these years of training and apprenticeship in child care, Annemarie kept in regular touch with her family by letter, but these letters reveal only the enthusiasm and dutifulness of a beloved daughter. Her letters are bright, cheerful, positive while her diaries reflect a darker side of her that was searching, cynical and desperate in her pursuit of purpose for her life. The differences between her letters and her diaries are initially much like the contrast between a Dr. Jeckyl and a Mr. Hyde.

During her days of training at Gettenbach, Annemarie visited the Rhon Bruderhof twice. She was a nominal Christian but the faith had no real meaning for her such as she so desperately sought. Her comments, recorded after her visit to the Bruderhof, reflect the profound impact this experience had upon her. She says things like these: "I was very warmly taken in . . . it was all extremely simple. . . . The simple communal means—everything—impressed me terrifically. It was again something of what I had experienced in the youth movement. . . . There was such a warmth and joy. . . . I was very much impressed but I did not think of the Bruderhof as a way of life for me. . . . But I remember a meeting in the Brotherhood room. . . . I do not know what the meeting



was about, but I can only say I felt strongly that something of the Holy Spirit was moving there. It just gripped me, and I felt: I have to come back here! I have to stay here!"

Her letters to her family until this moving experience seem little more than homey travelogues while the diary entries interspersed brought me up short again and again by their intensity and cynicism which at no time was ever revealed to the family. It is only after she joined the novitiate at the Bruderhof, and her later full affiliation, that her letters and diary entries take on a consistency and a vigor that reveals a spirit come home! She proves to have an eloquent gift for simple but passionate elaboration of her convictions and she needed to exercise this gift to the fullest in her attempt to retain the love and understanding of her family. They were obviously deeply disappointed in her decision and seemed to feel she had been brainwashed by a cult which they earnestly hoped would pass so that she might get over her infatuation and return to a more normal and nominal life again. But this was not to happen.

Annemarie proves very capable of persistently, lovingly but candidly defending her choice and she pleads that they well understand and accept the difference in their paths without cutting her off from their love and membership in the family. She says: "Love that ceases to exist because paths diverge is weak love."

There is every prospect that the chronicle that begins with this volume will extend to additional volumes. Much about the inner life and understanding of this movement with its use of the Hutterite manuscripts and its interaction with the Mennonite roots is evident as the story unfolds. This treasure trove of materials in the possession of the Society promises to give us further glimpses into the history of the Bruderhof as seen through the eyes of one who early became an integral part and exponent of the communal vision. Later Annemarie married Heini Arnold who was a strong leader and member of the Society until the time of his recent death.

This book is recommended to the students of Christian communalism and to Christian readers generally who value the contribution that this variety of Christian faith contributes to the other strands of major Christian expression. —Gerald C. Studer

## Samuel S. Wenger's Lancaster Typology

(In Memoriam)

Samuel S. Wenger, 1903-1989, apart from being one of the early lawyers within the (old) Mennonite Church, was also a strong and productive historian. His legal activities tell one story that should someday find its place within twentieth-century Mennonite history; for now, we will need to content ourselves with a few observations on "Samuel Wenger, the historian."

From 1955 to 1971, Sam Wenger was a member of the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church. After the end of his term, Wenger remained active in the world of history to the time of his death. His great publishing achievement lies in his 1200-page *The Wenger Book: A Foundation Book of American Wengers*, 1978. Apart from the genealogical value, central to the volume, Wenger included a short but important interpretive piece, "The Wengers on the Frontier" (pp. 51-53). He notes that the Wengers were farmers (and millers), whose descendants, in many cases for lack of land, needed to migrate to Virginia, Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Upper Canada (today, Ontario).

And although some of his typology on the nature of Lancaster Mennonitism, contrasting as it does with Franconia Mennonitism, did not find its way into the volume, Wenger more than once expounded on the Lancaster side of this equation to me, over lunch in a Lancaster restaurant. Here is my memory of the nature of his typology — a triad of forces that "Brother Sam" spun off so carefully, and with great thought. He said, namely, that three forces helped give definition to the Lancaster Mennonites: 1) the frontier effect; 2) wealth; and 3) the Amish connection.

In contrast to the Franconia Mennonites, being both farmer and artisan in composition, who soon found themselves as part of the Philadelphia hub of life, the Lancaster Mennonites were conscious of being frontier farmers, who kept their cultural distance from those-in-the-East. Within the structure of the Lancaster Mennonite polity, however, wealth played an important role in determining who remained Mennonite (many of those who could not afford to buy a farm, for example, left the Mennonite Church). Furthermore, although not all prosperous farmers were ministers, almost all ministers were capable farmers of means. And thirdly, the Lancaster Mennonites, although never having joined the Amish, nevertheless had accepted while in Europe certain of the Amish emphases, such as footwashing, and many of the doctrines of Menno Simons, along with Menno's approach to church authority from above. This would also explain the more conservative dress among the Lancaster Mennonites, a tradition that apparently has its roots in Europe.

Samuel Wenger's reflections, in this regard, are of the deepest significance for an understanding of the Lancaster Mennonites, suggesting that there are indeed differences among the various (old) Mennonite Church groups, not to speak of the other Mennonite groups. We need more research on this matter, showing exactly how, historically, the Franconia Conference, the Lancaster Conference, the Amish-Mennonites, the Russian Mennonites (with several types here as well), et al., stand in contrast, one with another, and where there is common ground in faith and life.

As we ponder the deeper implications of the Mennonite mergers currently under consideration, we can be thankful that a Samuel S. Wenger pondered these same questions of Conference character, and suggested, at least for Lancaster, something of a typology that seems useful for ongoing historical interpretation.

—Leonard Gross



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## Tribute to the Russian Mennonites, 1789-1989

### Assembly (Normal '89) Issue

#### A Hair-Raising Tale

Many older "Menno Onkels" who came to Moscow from their tranquil villages in 1929 had no notion of the hustle and bustle of modern metropolises. While in Moscow they, in complete ignorance of the ways of the world, found themselves caught in numerous amusing incidents. The eyes of many a Mennonite refugee, anxiously directed towards the future, were frequently given cause to light up briefly with a humorous twinkle. Already upon their arrival, the baggage carriers of the far eastern Kasan train station in Moscow had the greatest difficulty guiding many a representative of a serene Menno village across the busy traffic intersection, without a scratch, to the Zaroslav train station, from where they would then go to the surrounding villages and summer villas for temporary accommodation.

One young man had the task of accompanying two of these Onkels to the Ministry of the Interior, and of guiding them through the city, so that they could personally submit their exit application. His experience is most typical and, indeed, delightful.

This young man realizes immediately that here he is dealing with people unfamiliar with big city life when he gently asks Onkel N whether he has not forgotten to change his *Holtschlorren* (wooden farmers' clogs) for shoes.

"No," he says in Low German, "I'm not buying shoes. I want to go to America with my *Holtschlorren*. That's why I've had this new pair made."

The young guide finds himself getting a bit apprehensive and anxious, because of the uncompromising response of this disciple of wooden clogs. Diverse forebodings of possible complications begin to dawn on

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The Refugee Doll of 1947

In 1947 a trainload of 1100 Russian Mennonite refugees made its almost miraculous way from the American sector of Berlin, Germany, through the Russian zone, all the way to Bremerhaven. This was in the dead of winter, and all 1100 refugees were packed in freight cars, with nothing but straw on the floor, and one potbellied stove for heat.

Evangeline Matthies (Neuschwander), part of the Mennonite Central Committee team working with these refugees, after the refugees got off, checked each train car for anything left behind. In one car her foot uncovered, from under the straw, a small doll made of rags and stuffed with wool, with very fine stitching: must have been a frugal Christmas gift made for some child in the Berlin refugee camp. And now the child had lost it.

There was no way of finding its owner; the refugees by now were scattering, some on the Volendam, headed for Paraguay; others, back to Munich to await family members still scattered throughout Europe.

Evangeline decided this little doll would someday be made available to the whole church stitched so lovingly from rags as it was, at a time when each square inch of even the oldest rag material was needed for patching other clothing. For warfare had all but eliminated both food and clothing for broad masses of people.

This doll, pictured above, symbolizes a touch of love and parental caring, in that time of utter need and despair. And MCC helped grant hope to those who knew nothing but the privations and cruelties of war, yet who were now able to look forward to a new life of peace, within an orderly community. (Original doll in the Vernon and Evangeline Neuschwander Collection, Archives of the Mennonite Church. See *Henry's Red Sea*, by Barbara Smucker, for more on this story.) —Leonard Gross

#### Eine haarsträubende Geschichte

Die Weltfremdheit vieler aelteren Menno-onkels, die in ihrem beschaulichen Dorfleben keine Ahnung von dem Getriebe einer modernen Grossstadt hatten, fuehrte oft zu heiteren Zwischenfaellen. Dieser Umstand sorgte des oefteren fuer kurzes, humorvolles Aufleuchten sorgenvoll in die Zukunft blickender Augen, manches mennonitischen Fluechtlings, anno 1929 in Moskau. Schon bei ihrer Ankunft auf dem fernoestlichen Kasanjer Bahnhof in Moskau, hatten die Gepaecktraeger mit manchen Representanten friedlicher Menno-doerfer, groesste Muehe, diese mit heiler Haut und ganzen Knochen, ueber den dazwischen liegenden, belebten Verkehrsplatz, nach dem Jaroslawer Bahnhof, hinueber zu transportieren, von wo aus sie dann in die umliegenden Doerfer und Sommervillen, zeitweilige Quartiere suchten.

Ergoetzlich und charakteristisch ist aber das Erlebnis eines jungen Mannes, dem die Aufgabe wurde, zwei alte Onkels nach dem Innenministerium (Narodnij Komissariat Wnutrenich Del), als Fuehrer durch die Stadt zu geleiten, damit sie dort persoendlich ihre Gesuche um Ausreisegenehmigung einreichen konnten.

Dass er es nicht mit stadtkundigen Leuten zu tun habe, wurde dem jungen Manne sofort klar, als er Onkel N darauf aufmerksam machte, ob er nicht vergessen habe, seine Holzschlorren mit Schuhen zu vertauschen.

"Nee," sajt hee, "Schooh keep eck mi nich. Eck well mett mieni Holtschlorren não Amerika fõaren. Dee hab eck mi wegens dõato nie gemõakt."

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Continued from Page 1

him—but, after all, he and his two companions are now on their way. He, therefore, makes them especially aware of the importance of their staying right at his side.

“Yes,” says Onkel X, “but that’s difficult. These city folk push and shove like street rascals. And nobody even thinks of greeting you.”

“I’ll always keep an eye on your white *Schildmetz* (cap with a bill), then I can’t lose you,” says Onkel N.

Having arrived in Moscow, the would-be passengers genuinely storm the already fully occupied tram and literally squeeze themselves into it.

Onkel N had not realized that this treacherous tram might lunge forward with a sudden jerk and, indeed, he loses his all-important equilibrium. The next moment, as he searches for footing with the full impetus of his well-dimensioned *Holtshlorren*, he tramples on the delicate sandal-clad foot of a little lady standing behind him, who had already turned up her nose at him, as it were. Incensed and tormented with pain, the offended beauty permits the sum total of her annoyance at such barbaric behaviour to hail down in an uninterrupted flow of plain language upon the head of the totally flabbergasted Onkel N. “What kind of shoes . . . !” is the last audible Russian utterance the guide hears as he struggles towards the exit through the amused crowd in an attempt to distance himself from this raging storm. Exerting considerable force, Onkel N creates some elbow space and is finally able to stabilize himself.

The guide and Onkel X jump off and walk over to the sidewalk about three yards away. Onkel N jumps off last. At this moment he sees a car bearing down on him, although still at some distance. Turning around at lightning speed, he saves himself by jumping over onto the tramtrack. The driver and he wave to each other. Onkel N is very cautious. All the cars should go by first. The tram driver, however, is of a different opinion, and starts moving. This endows Onkel N with an unheard of

power of decision-making and, without paying attention to any cars at all, he plunges forth directly into the path of an oncoming car, which manages to brush just barely his fluttering coattails. With a sigh of relief he stands in front of his two companions. “Man, oh man, that guy almost took off with me.”

The young guide finds his courage plummeting to a point approaching minus zero, for now they are standing at the busiest downtown traffic junction, the Lubyanka, where the chain of crossing cars never breaks. How is he going to pilot this Onkel with his huge *Holtshlorren* across the street? — Onkel N puts on a most serious expression when it is indicated to him that he is supposed to make his way through this witch’s kettle. But he definitely wants to go along to America and assures the guide most earnestly that he will stay right at his heels in spite of all the cars. And so they venture forth to attempt the crossing.

It has never been determined which of the two rattled the most during the next moment, Onkel N’s *Holtshlorren* or his teeth. In any event, in the middle of the square all of Onkel N’s good resolutions go entirely down the drain as he, terrified, turns directly around and, post-haste, flees back, much to the merriment of the surrounding pedestrians. The other two have now crossed. All waving is to no avail: “To lose one’s life before arriving in America! No siree, that’s not what I’ve come to Moscow for.” Onkel N finds this much too dangerous.

The public begins to notice, and to have their bit of fun at the expense of the poor chicken, who now makes repeated attempts, but always rhythmically halts when the cars come, and flees back to his safe position. The guide senses the awkwardness of the situation and resorts to a most definitive and radical solution, as he moves on together with Onkel X. That’s more than Onkel N can take.

Throwing all fear of imminent

death to the wind he braces himself for the crossing and tears across the square, right into the center of all the dangerous traffic. He barely scrapes by one car, another one honks, applies its brakes—but already it’s too late; the front wheel is firmly lodged on one of Onkel N’s *Holtshlorren*.

Racing on at full tilt, no one can stop Onkel N now. One of the *Schlorren* remains behind, the other one and himself he brings across to safety. Gasping for breath, Onkel N grinds to a halt, two brightly coloured socks of ring design and one of the *Holtshlorren* on his feet. The other stands abandoned in the middle of the Lubyanka as a testimony to Mennonite culture in Moscow. Oncoming traffic avoids hitting it; and all the time the public gets the greatest kick out of it.

Onkel N dolefully glances back towards the ill-fated partner of the one clog he has on. The guide then succeeds at rescuing this precious article of attire and when all three are once more safely reunited, they continue on their way.

Once behind the Chinese Wall, in the complete absence of the noise of traffic, Onkel N regains his speech.

“Yes, this here’s OK, but over there, no sir, that’s not my kind of thing.”

“Yes, indeed,” says Onkel X, in support, “the end of the world is at hand. So many cars! Such traffic! It can’t be long anymore.”

When, months later at a gathering in Moelln, Prof. B. H. Unruh remarked that he was convinced that the dark days prior to Moscow had given rise to the best Mennonite jokes, a young man in the audience recalled the remarks of the two Onkels, earlier, behind the Chinese Wall.

And as for the *Holtshlorren*, they seemed to be a part of Onkel N’s anatomy—well, anyhow, at least until one fine day when they continued their journey to America on their own, overboard. Since then they have probably arrived at their own destination someplace overseas.



Continued from Page 1

Dem jungen Fuehrer will es ein bisschen schwuel bei dieser Erklaerung des kompromisslosen Pantoffelanhaengers werden, ihm daemmern allerhand Ahnungen ueber moegliche Komplikationen, aber sie sind nun schon unterwegs; daher macht er besonders darauf aufmerksam, dass sie sich stets nahe an ihn halten sollen.

“Jōa”, sagt Onkel X, “ōaba schwierig es daut. Schubbsen onn draengen dooni dee Staedta, aus Gaussijungis. Aun jreessen denkt keen Mensch nich.”

“Eck wōa emma nōa dieni witti Schildmetz kicki, dann kaun eck di nich veleeren,” sagt Onkel N.

In Moskau angelangt, wird die vollbesetzte Trambahn auch richtig gestuermt und sie quetschen sich ordentlich hinein.

Dass so eine tueckische Trambahn aber auch anrucken kann, war Onkel N neu und tatsaechlich verliert er das so notwendige Gleichgewicht und trampelt im naechsten Moment, haltsuchend, mit voller Wucht seiner dimensional Holzschlorren, auf den zierlichen, sandalenbekleideten Fuesschen, einer hinter ihm stehenden, ohnehin schon naseruempfinden Dame herum. Em-poert und von Schmerz gepeinigt, laesst die beleidigte Schoenheit, hemmungslos ihren ganzen Unmut, ob solchen barbarischen Benehmens, in ungeschminktem Redefluss, auf den total verbluefften Onkel N herniederprasseln. “Scho sa Obuvf,” ist noch das Letzte was der Fuehrer vernimmt, als er, um aus dem Bereich dieses Ungewitters zu kommen, durch das schmunzelnde Publikum hindurch, dem Ausgange zustrebt. Onkel N schafft sich gewaltsam Ellbogenfreiheit und findet wieder Anschluss.

Als der Fuehrer und Onkel X abspringen und auf den, etwa 3m entfernten Trottoir hinuebergehen, springt als Letzter auch Onkel N ab. In diesem Augenblick sieht er in ziemlicher Entfernung ein Auto auf sich zukommen. Blitzschnell macht er kehrt und rettet sich hinueber in die Trambahn. Diese Beiden winken; Onkel N bleibt vorsichtig. Die Autos

sollen erst alle werden. Der Tramlenker denkt aber anders und faehrt los. Das gab Onkel N die aeusserste Entschlusskraft und ohne mehr auf irgendwelchen Autos zu achten, stuerzt er haarscharf vor einem vorbeifahrenden Auto hinueber, welches seine flatternden Rockschoesse noch streift. Aufatmend steht er vor seinen Begleitern. “Nee, nee, de Keedel wea bolt mett mi dōavonnggefōaren.”

Dem jungen Fuehrer will der Mut fast unter Null sinken, denn nun stehen sie an dem belebtesten Kreuzpunkt der Innenstadt, an der Lubjanka, wo die Kette der sich kreuzenden Autos garnicht abreisst. Wie wird er da den Onkel N mit seinen maechtigen Holzschlorren hinueberlotzen? -- Onkel N macht die bedenklichste Miene, als ihm bedeutet wird, dass er durch den Hexenkessel hindurch soll. Er will aber mit nach Amerika und versichert hoch und teuer, allen Autos zum Trotz, dem Fuehrer auf den Fersen zu bleiben. So wird der Uebergang gewagt.

Was da im naechsten Moment mehr klappert, ob es nun Onkel N's Holzschlorren, oder Zaehne sind, ist nicht festgestellt worden. Jedenfalls, mitten auf dem Platz gehn Onkel N's gute Vorsaeetze restlos floeten und vor einigen, aus entgegengesetzter Richtung kommenden Autos, macht er entsetzt kehrt und fluechtet spornstreichs zurueck, unter heiterem Gelaechter voruebergegender Passanten. Die anderen Beiden sind drueben. — Da hilft kein Winken. — Noch vor Amerika sein Leben verlieren: “Nee, dōato si eck nich nōa Moskau gekōamen.” Onkel N scheint die Gefahr zu gross. Das Publikum wird aufmerksam und hat sein Gaudium an dem Angsthasen, der nun doch wiederholte Ansaetze macht, dann aber regelmaessig vor den Autos abstoppt und auf seinen sicheren Standort zurueckfluechtet. Dem Fuehrer wird die Lage peinlich und so greift er zum letzten Radikalmittel und geht mit Onkel X los. Das ist aber zuviel fuer Onkel N. Mit Todesverachtung setzt er an und rast ueber den Platz, mitten in all' die gefaehrlichen Autos hinein. An dem einen kommt er haarscharf vorbei, ein anderes hupt, bremst kurz ab, —

zu spaet; schon sitzt das Vorderrad in Onkel N's maechtigen Holzpantoffel. Dieser ist in seinem Schwunge aber nicht mehr abzubremesen. Der Schlorren bleibt stehn, den anderen und sich selber, rettet Onkel N gluecklich hinueber. Pustend bleibt Onkel N stehen; zwei buntgeringelte Struempfe und einen Holzschlorren an den Fuessen. Der andere steht verlassen, als Zeuge mennonitischer Kultur, mitten auf der Lubjanka in Moskau; die Autos fahren um ihn herum. Das Publikum hat einen Heidenspass. Onkel N aber blickt wehmuetig nach seinem Schlorrenpartner. Dies kostbare Toilettenstueck holt der Fuehrer dann auch noch heran und als nun alles wieder beisammen ist, gehn sie weiter.

Hinter der chinesischen Mauer, wo voellige Verkehrsstille herrscht, findet Onkel N die Sprache wieder.

“Jōa, dit's waut fe mi, ōaba jant — nee, daut's nich fe mi.”

“Jōa, jōa,” bekräftigt Onkel X “daut jeiht tom Weltennj. Soveel Autos! So'n Vekea! Daut kaun nich mea lang dieri.”

Als Monate spaeter, vor einer Versammlung in Moelln, Prof. B. H. Unruh sagte: “Ich bin ueberzeugt, dass in den schweren Tagen vor Moskau, die besten mennonitischen Witze gefallen sind,” da gedachte der junge Mann der Aussprueche jener beiden Onkels, damals hinter der chinesischen Mauer.

Und die Holzschlorren? Onkel N schien damit verwachsen, bis — ja, bis sie eines Tages ueber Bord weg, die Weiterreise nach Amerika selbstaendig fortsetzten und inzwischen wohl irgendwo in Uebersee gelandet sind.

—Translated and adapted by Gerhard Reimer, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana. The author of the German version is Peter Pauls, Sr., Brazil. It is herewith published in the main as originally written and edited by Pauls, including the Portuguese symbols Pauls used in the Low German portions, and the “ae”, “oe”, and “ue” as the form for identifying German umlauts. (From the Walter Quiring Collection, Hist. Mss. 1-365, Box 1.)



## “Queer People”

by Dorothy Thompson

Recently I was booked to speak at a small college in Kansas, and en route mentioned its name to a fellow passenger on the train, who had opened a conversation regarding the various stops on my tour. “I believe that Bethel College is a Mennonite institution,” I said, “and that interests me very much, because I really know nothing about the Mennonites.”

“Queer people,” remarked my companion. “All the men wear beards, and the women wear some sort of gray clothes, don’t they?”

A man across the aisle joined in. “Aren’t those the folks who wear no clothes at all? I thought they lived in Canada.”

“Those are Dukhobors,” I said from my limited knowledge, “and I don’t think they wear no clothes except occasionally, but anyhow they aren’t Mennonites.”

“They have a college? Didn’t know they believed in higher education,” said the first speaker. “They don’t believe in war, like the Quakers. And don’t they believe in the Second Coming of Christ?”

“They’re wonderful farmers,” remarked the second speaker. “Don’t know why.”

“Anyhow,” concluded my companion, therewith dismissing the subject, “they are queer people—*very* queer.”

And the conversation turned to whether President Truman was certain to run again, whether General Eisenhower would be a candidate, and what were the chances of Taft.

In the next two days, however, I learned more about the people we had discussed, and what I learned has occupied my thoughts ever since.

My hosts and sponsors in Newton, Kansas, did not wear beards, and their wives and daughters dressed like any other modest American women, with the emphasis on cleanliness and simplicity. They lived in charming homes with (I thought) exceptionally natural, well-mannered children. They are not proselytizers, nor did they seek to ram their religious concepts down my throat. But I was quickly caught up in a unique atmosphere, difficult to describe. It was not an atmosphere of “piety” in the

usual connotations of that word, nor of sectarianism, which so easily becomes wrangling, nor of the self-righteousness that so quickly puts one on the defensive. It was an atmosphere, no less powerful because entirely unobtrusive, of serenity and peace, and far from being “queer.”

These “queer” people, I learned, are practically creedless. The sum of their faith is to be found in the New Testament, and especially in the Lord’s Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount. They believe that in his teachings Christ revealed to humanity the laws of God, laws that are basic in the structure of the universe, and that, unlike man-made laws, operate without the slightest possibility of failure. These laws, if recognized and observed, are the path to abundant life and they are summed up in the injunction to “love the Lord thy God with all thy strength and with all thy spirit, and thy neighbor as thyself.”

The “queer” people believe that the Christian life is a life to be lived, every day, in every thought and deed—nor do they divide thought and act. Thought, in its highest, most concentrated form, is directed, as prayer, for the fuller understanding and revelation of God’s law of love; such thought, they believe, is an actual force in the universe, as “real” as electricity, as the actions which follow and conform with it are its incorporation in external reality. To think and act according to God’s revealed laws is therefore to live naturally, according to inherent, natural law, and to reap *inevitably* a more *abundant* life.

Into everything, therefore, that the “queer” people do, enters this fourth-dimensional element of love and service to God’s laws. Therefore, one’s work must be lovingly done well, joyfully but without strain, with gratitude for its material rewards, but without concentration on them, since all one’s doings are a service to God and to his children—humanity.

I saw a very simple illustration of this when I visited a center for the collection of food and clothing for the victims of war and hatred living in refugee camps abroad. Although the “queer” people settled in various communities number altogether only 100,000 people in America, they have sent thousands of tons of food and clothing abroad. The manager of the collection center in Newton, Kansas, is a woman who receives for her

services, “because she needs the little extra money,” \$40 per month. Housed in a huge Quonset hut were bales and bales of clothing and food. I remarked on the neatness of the secondhand clothing: everything was immaculately clean; neatly mended, where mending was necessary; never a button missing; shoes cobbled and shined. In each garment was a small label, only two inches square, bearing the words “In the name of Christ.” The director said smilingly (but with even a shade of tartness), “One can’t send a suffering people useless old castoffs in the name of Christ. What we send has to be decent and worthy of that label.”

Then I understood why the “queer” people are famous the world over as farmers. To them the earth is the Lord’s, to be worked in harmony with God’s laws, as these can be discerned. An ill-kept field, soil mined without regard to the generations to come, woods devastated for immediate profit, land eroded from neglect and indifference are affronts to the original and ultimate Owner.

Perhaps one of the “queerest” things about the “queer” people is that though they have lived in many countries, and been persecuted in most, they have always come to new lands on *invitation*.

Their communities came into existence with the dawn of the Protestant revolution. When Luther, Calvin and Zwingli were carving their mighty sects out of the heart of Europe, a little group of leaders, with beliefs more liberal and simple than those of these great religious sects, gathered together in private homes in Zurich, Switzerland, to formulate the simple faith they hold to this day. They recognized the necessity of the state and taught cheerful payment of taxes, but they rejected war as a deadly sin. They were furiously persecuted—and by *all* the other religions.

But the industry, frugality and honesty of their lives impressed even great rulers, who recognized them as an asset to any nation. Frederick the Great of Prussia invited them to Germany, to be an example to native farmers; Catherine the Great of Russia offered them great inducements to settle in the Ukraine for the same reason. And there they lived in peace and honor until later rulers of both countries sought to draft them into armies, and popular passions for



conformity resented even their nonaggressive existence. In new America, William Penn invited them to Pennsylvania; and the builders of the Santa Fe Railroad, looking for settlers in the wilderness of Kansas, having heard of the Ukrainian settlements, invited them there. These settlers brought with them, from Russia, the first "hard" or winter wheat ever seen in this country, which over the years has transformed the wheat culture of Midwestern America.

Not all their communities are identical. They have their "fundamentalists" whose men wear beards and affect a peculiar dress, while others adopt in these particulars the habits of the general American community. But spiritually they are one.

The college at which I spoke is a fully accredited liberal-arts college, having on its faculty excellent teachers, many with Ph.D. and Masters' degrees from the greatest American universities. Yet the "queer" people do believe that the cultivation of the intellect alone, divorced from the cultivation of the soul, is productive of evil, not good.

"A brilliant spiritual moron armed with all the instruments that education and training can give, is more dangerous to society than an ignorant spiritual moron," a member of the college administration remarked to me.

At any rate, wherever they have settled, the land has bloomed and comely settlements have sprung up. Always they have created substantial, stable, modest prosperity. They have paid their taxes to sustain the laws of the state, but the taxes have not had to be expended upon the "queer" people, among whom crime, divorce and poverty are practically unknown. The prisons that have housed them have been prisons only for those who have refused to register for military service. For the conviction that war is sin, that by the immutable laws of God which are synonymous with the laws of nature, war breeds war, hatred hatred, and destruction destruction, they have suffered to greater or lesser degree everywhere, but calmly, without rancor.

When a czar of Russia quizzically inquired of a delegation, "Where would nations get their soldiers if all

men were like you?" they did not reply; the answer, of course, being implicit. Yet even the czars did not imprison them, but set them, in wartime, at the hardest, most menial tasks. It remained for Stalin to scatter and disperse the remnants of their communities and to send their members to forced-labor camps—in the name of a creed promising to end all human exploitation and universal "peace."

It is perfectly true—observable in everyday life—that whatever is done for love is well performed, and that the element of love makes the performance *voluntary*, pleasurable and free.

It is also true that love of others—an extension and sublimation of self-love—is somehow tied to the instinctive knowledge of love as the source of life; i.e., as a Force of Creation, or God. It is also observably true that war has never created a just peace; that those who truly love (without possessiveness) are loved in return; that justice without mercy (which is also love) always turns out to be injustice; and that punishment never reformed anybody. Love both disciplines and liberates. Crime is the expression of hatred of society, and hatred, nine times out of ten, is frustrated love.

Science in our lifetime has discovered the composition of the universe, and has revealed that it is composed not of "matter" but of energy; and science has demonstrated how to disintegrate it. The truths scientists discovered were here all the time for those who could deduce them. But humankind has not, as a whole, discerned the integrating element in the universe—though they have given it a name—God.

And the more I have thought about it the more I have wondered whether the "queer" people are not just a little more "scientifically advanced" than the rest of us in the most fundamental of all the sciences, the one that should reveal how we can continue to live together on this planet, in this universe.

They think the secret has been here all the time—ever since Christ lived and died and lived again as a spirit as close as one's own breathing, as real and discernible as the trust in the eyes of a child.

Reprinted from *Ladies Home Journal*, January, 1952.

## What History can Teach us about One Another

*In honor of the Russian Mennonite Bicentennial, 1789-1989, MHB published an 1819 account of the Russian Mennonites, thirty years after they began their emigration from Prussia to Russia, and an 1883 account of the Russian Mennonites, nine years after their immigration to Canada and the United States (see the January 1989, and the July 1988 issues, respectively).*

*This issue, too, is a tribute to the Russian Mennonites. "A Hair-Raising Tale" suggests something of the Russian Mennonite humor, here in the original (high) German, Low German, and even Russian languages, but also given parallel space in the English idiom, translated and adapted by a specialist, Gerhard Reimer, of Goshen, Indiana.*

*The reprinted article, "Queer People," by Dorothy Thompson, is also a period piece from 1952, a sympathetic interpretation by an outsider of the (General Conference) Mennonites in and around Newton, Kansas. Of deep significance, here, are the so-obvious threads of faith, so common to all Mennonites, suggesting that the Russian Mennonites of 1874ff, and the Mennonites of 1683ff, although arriving in North America via such differing cultural and geographic routes, indeed are of one spiritual piece, hewn from the same rock of faith, the substance and spirit of which is Jesus' Gospel of Peace.*

*A report from 1880 by Philip Wismer shows how closely the Canadian "old" Mennonites worked with Russian Mennonite immigrants at that time. Similar reports could be published of this same close interaction and cooperation within the United States.*

*Rounding out this issue, we include an outsider's observations of the Iowa Mennonites in 1919. The author, Nels Peterson, although sympathetic to the Mennonites, believes that laws permitting conscientious objection should be taken off the books. He says, further: "Conscientious and religious scruples are largely the creation of education and environment. . . ." This may well be true, which suggests the ongoing agenda of peace that is ours to uphold, for those of us at least who stand on the other side of the war-and-peace fence.*

*(An article by Cindy Hines Kurfman, "The Old, the New, the Abiding," earlier announced to go into this issue, is instead scheduled for the Aug. 1989 issue of Christian Living, under a different title.)*

—Leonard Gross



## Iowa Amish-Mennonites

### An Outsider's View, 1919

On April 12, 1919, journalist Nels Peterson of Olds, Iowa, wrote in a local newspaper about the rift that had developed between the Amish-Mennonites and some community members over their conscientious objection during World War I. His sympathetic view towards the Mennonites as people, yet at the same time his critical view of their beliefs, is noteworthy. While he does not support the legitimacy of conscientious objection, neither does he support community members or organizations illegally taking matters into their own hands against conscientious objectors. Also of significance are his perceptions of their "modern" meetinghouse, and of two elderly, German-speaking ministers. His literary style is interesting to note, especially the third sentence in the third paragraph which contains 269 words. (Original clipping in Guy F. Hershberger Collection, Hist. Mss. 1-171, Box 74, folder 75.) —J. Kevin Miller

### Some Thoughts by Nels Peterson

At a funeral in the Amish church near Wayland today, I will have to admit some thoughts flitted through my mind that were not probably in every particular just in proper order. The services were the last sad rites over the remains of Ben Roth who has spent so many years in that immediate neighborhood during 23 years of which (being half of life) he has been deprived of (as Rev. Musselman so touchingly put it) that precious possession, sight. The funeral was conducted by Rev. Musselman, Graber, Gingerich and Gerig. Mr. Musselman spoke from the subject that "For every loss and sacrifice there is a compensation" and as before intimated, very neatly applied this to the long period of enforced material darkness to the late Mr. Roth. Mr. Gingerich made an interesting talk upon the certainties of death but the uncertainties of when, where and how it would occur and the lessons of warning and preparedness that we should take from the same. Both spoke words of comfort to the bereaved.

Mr. Graber and Gerig spoke in

German, so of course I could not tell what they said, but that it was good, appropriate and to the point, I am certain, for no two grand old men like them would do anything else on an occasion like this. The Amish people surely ought to feel proud of their church because for size, ventilation, light, easy and adequate of entrance and exit, with splendid opportunity for sight and hearing in every part of its vast auditorium and with every modern convenience of heating, lighting, cloakrooms and kitchen, etc., it has no superior if any equal in the country.

The thoughts being first referred to were aroused, when seeing the supposedly sacred building had at some time in the past been desecrated, or rather some one had (it is hoped innocently) disgraced himself by daubing it with yellow paint. Now the first thoughts that came to my mind upon seeing this certainly misguided work was, that whoever did this didn't need any paint to make him yellow. This would surely be true if it had been done in a spirit of meanness or malice but on further thought it became inconceivable and unbelievable that in a community like this with a class of people than whom there are no better, that such could have been the case and that it must have been the result of weakness rather than vice, foolish and unwise zeal instead of devilish depravity, and when looking over the audience assembled there today and seeing the large number of good, old as well as young and middle aged mothers and fathers and the many fine appearing specimen of growing up children and young folks and remembering the large class of splendid people of both sides of the past controversy not present at this meeting and thinking that the older ones had in friendship, confidence and respect for each other, for a generation lived together in amity and peace, had raised, educated and developed into worthy successors, children running in some cases into the second and third generation, had in many instances endured the hardships and privations of pioneer and early day life together, I could not possibly think that anything but the truest and most sincere conviction and faith in the right and justice of these respective (though in some cases radically differing) positions, could have led to some of the things

that have unfortunately happened in the community and consequently hoping the people of this neighborhood will all come to this conclusion, I truly believe time will soon restore the former relationship of friendship and confidence.

But notwithstanding the above, and now with the great and horrible world war—in its main fighting features at least—are happily over with, it is probably not out of place to stop and consider some of the things that we should have thru (sometimes sad) experiences learned from the same and among others is this, that during times of peace no important and general laws should be enacted or permitted to remain on our statute books that will cause trouble and mischief during times of war, at least not such as the law that allows religious, conscientious or any other scruples to relieve or exempt any one from performing the same duties that are required of any others in the services of their country during times of need and danger.

Conscientious and religious scruples are largely the creation of education and environment and no teachings or doctrines should be permitted either during times of peace or war that will give any people any reasons for thinking or believing that they will on any such grounds be relieved or excused from performing their full obligations to their country the same as is required of others, and in reality no person should wish to be exempt from important and necessary duties except for the same reasons that relieve others under like circumstances, and I do not think that any one would, if the laws of the land and the past usages had not permitted the development and growth of such wrong, though in most cases sincere ideas and beliefs.

On the other hand I do not think that very often at least, any person or organization of persons are justified in thinking themselves better and above the laws of the land, and thus illegally taking matters into their own hands and improperly and often brutally doing things that are intended to disgrace others, but which in reality, though sometimes unjustly puts the stamp of heathen and brute upon themselves. Our laws are no doubt such, that those who live up to them in letter and spirit are pretty good citizens of the state, residents of



the community and members of a church and family if they have any, and in most instances can well afford to allow the properly elected and appointed officers of the law to see to its enforcement and don't really need to take the execution of the same into their own hands in order to advance and exalt their own personal standing in the community.

The best means of promoting good government is just laws and their impartial enforcement by the proper authorities with no attempt at evasion on the part of one class, or zealous, though improper effort at enforcement by another class. If we truly wish to make our country safe for democracy, we better not too literally attempt the job for the whole world, and in our associations both at home and abroad, not too exactly under all kinds of circumstances, insist upon our rights, but rather more willingly at times yield them to the more important performance of our duties.

To always, to the letter, demand our rights is selfish, though human, while to yield them to duty is noble and divine. You can't make any place safe for democracy by refusing to do your part even with law on your side. Neither can you do so by trying to compel your neighbors to do their part with the law against you. This is just as wrong as the other and both lead to mischief and trouble and the one, though under the mask and disguise of religious and conscientious scruples is often but the selfish attempt of improper and undeserved exemption from duty, while the other in probably equally numerous cases, is but a hypocritical effort at a show of loyalty and patriotism that does not at heart exist, but the absence of which through camouflage, it is sought to conceal.

You can not make the world nor even your own country safe for democracy through subjecting your neighbor to disgrace or contempt and creating sores it may take generations to heal by painting person or property yellow simply because someone does not see things as you do or hasn't chosen the same shade of color for personal ideals as you have. The whipping of the kaiser, which has been so admirably done, has not been helped or hastened by any yellow paint of the private citizen, nor any tin horn or pop gun display of patriotism by any official, though much individual distress and sorrow

has been wrought by the former and a great deal of public inconvenience and disappointment by the latter, nor on the other hand has the downfall and destruction of oppressive and world domineering autocracy been delayed or prevented by any religious or conscientious scruples but yet much local trouble and contention has been caused by the same, so in general results, neither side has cut any perceptible figure, though in local and detailed instances much mischief has been done by both.

Now this writing is not intended for the purpose of reviving or perpetuating these irritating and annoying differences and contentions but rather if possible to show that they have not in any case accomplished any ground but in many instances done much local and individual harm and also that as in most instances, they have been the result of honest and sincere differences of opinions on both sides and consequently the future should not be permitted to be disturbed by any animosities, contentions or ill will by reason of these past troubles, and that people who before these disagreeable things occurred were friends and associated with each other in amity, confidence and mutual respect may again do so to the fullest and freest extent and resolve that with God's help they shall all do everything possible to prevent another such horrible world war. But if in spite of all they can do to prevent it, it will again occur, they will at least never again resort to such little, petty and personal means to either win or defeat it.

### Record of

**Russian Mennonite Aid Committee for Lincoln County, Ontario, 1873-80**

**by Deacon Philip Wismer**

*During the 1870s many Russian Mennonites immigrated to the Canadian and American Midwest: especially to Manitoba, and to Kansas and the Dakotas. John F. Funk was at the center of this major operation in the United States--along with many hundreds of Mennonites from Pennsylvania to Illinois who helped as they were able, financially and otherwise, in the overall process. In Ontario, Jacob Y. Shantz was the clerk and treasurer of the Russian Mennonite Aid Committee for Lincoln County, Ontario, that helped more than 6000 Russian Mennonites to relocate, almost all of them going to Manitoba.*

*Philip Wismer, a member of the Committee, filed this summary report for the years 1873-1880. (For the story of Jacob Y. Shantz, including his part in the immigration process, see Samuel J. Steiner, Vicarious Pioneer: the Life of Jacob Y. Shantz, Hyperion Press, Ltd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1988. Original report in the S. F. Coffman Collection, Archives of the Mennonite Church.) -Leonard Gross*

Short sketch of Mennonites emigrating from Prussia to Russia, and from thence to the Province of Manitoba in the Dominion of Canada.

In the years 1789, 1803, 1804, 1818 and 1819, having been deprived of the liberties of conscience, thousands of Mennonites with great wealth emigrated from Prussia to Southern Russia, where the Authorities promised them the liberty of conscience, and other privileges for all time to come; since which time, from year to year, great numbers of them have emigrated thither; and having lived there, enjoying the privileges the Russian Government held out to them until the year 1871, in which year the Russian Authorities also deprived them of the liberties of conscience, giving them ten years time to leave the country, or otherwise take up arms in defense of the country. Thus also being deprived of the privileges which the Russian Authorities had granted them for all time to come, they sent a deputation to America to seek a home where they might again live unmolested, embracing their former privileges; several of the deputation having come to Ontario, and the Government at Ottawa hearing of their being in the county of Waterloo, sent for one of them in company with Jacob Y. Shantz to come to Ottawa. Mr. Shantz and one of the deputation, immediately upon the request, went to Ottawa to hold a consultation with the Government; its holding out good inducements by allowing them the liberties of conscience for all time to come; and also giving to each head of family a free grant of 160 acres of land in the Province of Manitoba, and also aiding them very considerably in making the journey from Hamburg to the young colony; upon which the deputation in company with Mr. Shantz went to said new colony to see what inducements for settlement they could find there; the deputation being pleased with his



contemplated new home, decided on bringing numerous families with his own, to settle in the far west; being nearly one third of the circumference of the Globe from their homes in Russia to their homes in Manitoba. . . . N.B. A Russian Mennonite Aid Committee has been established in Ontario composed of the following persons: Jacob Y. Shantz, Clk. & Trsr.; Elias Snider; John Goscho; Samuel Reesor; John Koch; and Philip Wismer.

We the undersigned agree to pay the sums set opposite our respective names as a loan for the purpose of aiding such of our Russian Brethren as are in indigent circumstances who are emigrating from Russia to Manitoba:

(Dec. 22, 1873): Lawrence Hipple, Philip Wismer, Daniel Honsberger, John Rittenhouse, Joseph B. Moyer, Michael H. Rittenhouse, John F. Rittenhouse, Jacob F. Rittenhouse, A. K. Honsberger, Jacob Kratz, David Grobb, Abraham Rittenhouse, Samuel Culp, Moses Grobb, Samuel T. Moyer, Samuel H. Moyer, John Grobb, Abram H. High, David Fretz, Jacob H. High, Jacob Honsberger, Henry Albright, John M. High, Andrew Kratz, Samuel J. Moyer, Jonas Grobb, Henry Grobb, Samuel Fry, Samuel Tufford, Isaac Culp Sr., Michael Martin, John Tufford, Christian H. Honsberger, Joseph H. Moyer, Christian Kratz, Jacob S. Kratz, Franklin W. Moyer, Solomon W. Moyer, David L. Moyer, Tilman W. Moyer, David H. Moyer, William H. Moyer, David Sevenpiper, John Wismer, John Moyer, William W. Moyer, Christian H. Moyer, Jacob S. Moyer, Henry Honsberger, Abraham M. Moyer, John W. Moyer, Jacob L. Moyer, Elizabeth Moyer, Jacob Houser, Freeman Wismer, Abraham Wismer.

*Here follow several listings of new subscriptions through 1880, with names, and amounts. The concluding section of the report then follows:*

For all monies raised in this County, Lincoln, either by Subscription or otherwise, and loaned to the Russian Mennonites in Manitoba, Notes of hand have been taken properly drawn up and signed so as to make the heads of the Church, as well as those who received the money, responsible for the payment of said money. (Save and except \$5000. raised by Philip Wismer as you will see

below.) . . .

On the 14th. December, 1876, the Russian Mennonite Aid Committee of Ontario met in Toronto to take into consideration what course to take to raise a further sum of money to aid the Russian Mennonites in Manitoba. Present Jacob Y. Shantz, Samuel Reesor, John Koch, & Philip Wismer. Upon mature consideration they arrived at the conclusion that they with others who were willing to join them, to borrow money from the Government (a balance of a grant of \$100,000 yet being available). The following persons borrowed from the Government the sums set opposite their respective names, from whom a Mortgage is to be taken [list follows].

...Russian Mennonites having emigrated to Manitoba:... Arrival in Toronto [1874-1880]: 1281 families, (6674 souls), with \$591,000 capital.

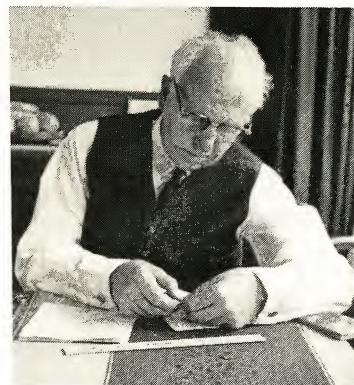
### Jan Gleijsteen, Sr [1895-1989]

A grand old man left us on April 16, well-known to many a Mennonite over the decades. Many travelers met him in Amsterdam and elsewhere in the Netherlands, where he regularly interpreted a hundred nooks and crannies symbolizing Dutch culture in general, and Doopsgezinde (Mennonite) history in particular. He could outwalk most youth—even into his eighties. And in his own person he symbolized the centuries-old Dutch Anabaptist tradition of peace. His energies, if they found their outlet in any one sphere, went into his lifelong peace testimony: that true peace from the Christian standpoint is based upon the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth—biblical nonresistance, to be exact. All other approaches, such as that of political pacifism, at best pale in comparison, and at worst, are but an illusion, so he was wont to say.

For much of his life Jan Gleijsteen maintained a bookstore in Amsterdam, and was ever on the search for volumes, stacks of which went, perennially, to the Mennonite historical libraries of Goshen, Bethel, and Eastern Mennonite colleges. He seemingly could smell rare books, near and far, and was able to amass thousands of volumes at a time—before the Second World War, and again in 1945ff—when prices were still affordable. In part, because of his interests in Anabaptist history, in part, because of his and his

family's warmth and character, the Gleijsteen home was a constant beehive of international activity, where a continuous flow of brothers-and-sisters-in-the-faith could be seen. Beginning in 1955 I was grateful to become part of this flow. These many contacts continued to the time of his death.

The Singel Mennonite Church of Amsterdam was Jan Gleijsteen's church home for all of 89 years, where he attended faithfully ever since the age of five, Sunday after Sunday. That is, except for the period of his imprisonment during the First World War, when he suffered for his nonresistant faith, rather than to compromise his conscience by answering the call to enter military service. Indeed, he was one of eight Dutch, and the only Mennonite to take this stand at that time. Today, biblical nonresistance as a position is again a strong component of Dutch Mennonitism—in part, thanks to Jan Gleijsteen's example.



Jan Gleijsteen was an avid reader; he received and read the Mennonite Historical Bulletin for almost fifty years, except for the war years when mail service was halted. He once told me that we should try to have a few different types of articles in each issue, rather than one long one, as a way to broaden readership interest. We have not always followed this good advice, yet it remains exactly that: good advice that should guide us accordingly, over the longer term.

Jan Gleijsteen, Sr., was dressed for church, and was just finishing his cup of tea, when death came, that Sunday a.m. on April 16. It is good to know that something of Jan Gleijsteen, Sr.'s legacy lives on in his son, Jan Gleysteen, of the Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, who continues, strong, the peace witness in much the same fashion as did his father.

—Leonard Gross



## The Inner Faith and the External

Interview with S. C. Yoder, January 11, 1973 (Excerpt)

*Leonard Gross:* You, a bishop in the Mennonite Church, now 93 years of age, have taught and preached for many decades. If you were to preach next Sunday, what would your message be?

*Sanford Yoder:* My contact with the College Mennonite Church has been so distant that I just have not been in there to hardly know even who is who. But I think I would emphasize the simple things. This element in our church has not been handled the way it should have been to bring about the best results. So often it had to do with the externals of our practices, you see, and not with the inner life of a person. And I felt, and I feel now, that if the outer appearance or expressions of a person are not a result of a deep inner feeling, why, it is not doing its very best. That is the way I feel, to be candid and charitable about it. I think I would like to say that.

Promoting the externals can do more harm than good. I know instances where that has been true. I believe in a deep Christian experience. And I think that if you have an inner experience, it manifests itself in an outward experience, but not necessarily in the prescribed forms like the Mennonites earlier had and like the Amish people have. When I was a boy up to twelve years old, my people — my father and mother — were Amish people and my father was never very happy in the Amish church. And yet he was not a man given to extremes in dress and his work. He was a steam engineer. He had a threshing machine and sawmill and everything that goes with it, but he was — I always thought he was — a good practical Christian in his life and his attitude and work.

*Gross:* You talk about a simple faith. What does this include? What is the simple faith?

*Yoder:* I think what people believe will affect their conduct and their dai-

ly life and way of thinking, their attitude toward things — that love will be a result of what they believe, of an inner life. And if that inner life is not very well developed, you can expect some rather unwholesome experiences too, you see, like you have in churches among people. And I think instead of just insisting upon some outer forms and as though that would cure everything, the place to begin is with a person's faith, what he or she believes, and it will work itself out. That has been my attitude all the time.

*Gross:* So if you would preach a sermon, say, next Sunday, you would

say something like this perhaps?

*Yoder:* I would do the best I could. It has been so long since I have preached. I am just at the age now when I get kind of confused. Some things do not come to me at the time they should. That kind of spoils it then. But I think I would follow pretty much the pattern that I did when I was at Goshen, speaking and preaching the gospel and trying to get that into people's minds and into their experience, and then let them work it out without using external measures to bring it about. You have to do that by preaching and teaching...



S. C. Yoder and Edward Yoder, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, ca. 1937

S. C. Yoder and Edward Yoder, with their quiet—somewhat behind-the-scenes—personalities, were both highly significant in their time. Their influence is still to be felt today. For they lived during a time of Mennonite “externals,” and sometimes rather rigid strictures in dress and deportment. Each, in his own manner, was able to sight the plumb line of faith and inner conviction, that in turn would then express itself in corresponding outward action. Both thus held to the direct connection between inner character and its outward manifestation.

*MHB* in recent times has made mention of Edward Yoder. Yet it has been years since *MHB* has reminded its readership of S. C. Yoder. The Interview, above, although coming as it does near the end of S. C.'s life, confirms his basic view of the power of inner faith and its outworking.

There is reason to plumb the life and spirit of S. C. Yoder—but also Edward Yoder—to see how these spiritual giants transcended the limits of their time, in their attempt to remain true to the Christian faith as they had experienced and understood it. --Leonard Gross



## Mennonite Rhetoric: A Case Study of the Preaching of John S. Coffman (1848-1899)

by Roy Umble\*

This address is about Mennonite preaching. It is a case study of John S. Coffman, who lived from 1848 to 1899. He is a representative of a group of church leaders who provided vision and program for the Mennonite Church in the late nineteenth century, 1875-1900.

Preaching, to be sure, has been and continues to be a significant form of public address. James Milton O'Neill, for example, included sermons in his *Classified Models of Speech Composition*.<sup>1</sup>

But first I wish to explain how I am using the word "Mennonite." Mennonites represent the left wing of the Protestant Reformation in sixteenth-century Europe: one group in Holland, and one in Switzerland and southern Germany. They believed in Scriptural authority, in adult believer's baptism, simplicity as a way of life, and following Christ in the way of peace and love. Viewed from the outside, Mennonites have sometimes been characterized by what they oppose. They have traditionally been against infant baptism, the swearing of oaths, and participation in war.<sup>2</sup>

Migrations to the New World continued throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, beginning in Germantown, Pennsylvania, in 1683. From Pennsylvania they moved west as far as Kansas and Dakota, and north to Ontario. In Indiana the first settlements were in Lagrange and Elkhart counties in the 1840s.<sup>3</sup>

John Samuel Coffman, of Swiss-German stock, born in Rockingham County, Virginia, farmed, taught school and attended institutes and night classes.<sup>4</sup> To teach himself, he read from a limited supply of books. At the age of twenty-seven he was ordained to the ministry. Four years

later he moved to Elkhart, Indiana, in response to an invitation by John F. Funk, editor of the *Herald of Truth*, the only church-wide periodical at that time. The move changed the life of Coffman and his family and also produced major changes within the Mennonite Church of North America.

**Preparation.** Among the major factors that shaped Coffman's personality were: the example of his minister-bishop father, the love and concern of his mother, his desire for an education, his limited formal education, his experience as a refugee in Pennsylvania during the Civil War, and his work as a farmer and teacher. Another strong influence was music. Coffman's biographer, M. S. Steiner, reports that Coffman conducted singing schools and took an active part in teachers institutes and literary activities.<sup>5</sup> Being an able chorister was one path to the ministry. A teacher at Bridgewater Normal, Dr. Buckner, liked Coffman and offered free use of his library, including a book on rhetoric by Quackenbos.<sup>6</sup> After he was chosen by lot, Coffman was ordained on July 18, 1875. Soon he became a well-known itinerant evangelist.

**Issues.** Two major themes appear in his preaching: evangelism and education. For him evangelism was an urgent call to follow Christ. "Go and tell" was a favorite subject. He believed in outreach; his vision began with "mission." His first audience was his own denomination: Christians who were church members but who were, in his words, "inactive," or young sons and daughters of members who had delayed joining church. He also included his neighbors and friends.<sup>7</sup> In one sermon he asks, "Who is to hear this preaching?" He answers, "The promise is to you and

your children, . . . to all men everywhere."<sup>8</sup>

His second major thrust was education. He believed that the church needed committed and educated young men and women to carry on the work of Christ and the church. Coffman's editorial work at the Mennonite Publishing Company provided time for reading and study and also an opportunity for interaction with the faculty and students of Elkhart Institute, the forerunner of Goshen College. As president of the board of directors, he was the logical choice to present the dedication speech for the new building. His "Spirit of Progress" address,<sup>9</sup> February 11, 1896, was a classic in that day and is still quoted by Mennonite educators.

**Forms of support.** Coffman's forms of support and rhetorical devices include:

1. narrative from biblical, historical and literary sources;
2. motive appeals—loyalty, self respect, acquisition and reverence;
3. language imagery and sentence fluency; and
4. personality and delivery.

(1) His choice of topics and biblical texts ranged widely in the New Testament, especially: Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, Romans, Ephesians and Revelation; and from the Old Testament: Isaiah, Haggai and the Psalms. In his evangelism sermons he often began with the story of the children of Israel, moved on to the early Christian church, and, reaching the height of his address, appealed to the vision and opportunities within the present day church. Instead of criticizing, he invited. The inevitable conclusion was an invitation to become an active part of this great

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tradition. "Go tell . . . we have a great work to do."<sup>10</sup>

When he spoke of the need for education, for educated young people, the future leaders, he would present in considerable detail the events leading to the Reformation, including those initiated by Peter Waldo in Italy. He then invariably recounted the lives of various Anabaptist leaders in Europe. As an excellent example of this we have the full text of his dedication address, "The Spirit of Progress," presented at the Elkhart Institute. Four years earlier he had used much of this same material in an evangelizing sermon.<sup>11</sup>

(2) The power and winsomeness of his appeal brought a response from dozens, indeed hundreds of the youth and young married couples who heard him.<sup>12</sup> Although he called for change and action, he spoke with respect about the early leaders of the church. Of Peter Waldo, he said, "The good work again took root and spread in all directions,"<sup>13</sup> and "Menno Simons was a missionary of the first class."<sup>14</sup> And of more recent leaders whom some may wish to criticize for inactivity, he added, "It is a tender spot that is touched in us when we speak of our fathers."<sup>15</sup>

While some leaders may have been advocating "resting in the everlasting arms of Jesus," he requested action, even Christian competition:

Other churches around us have been gaining large numbers . . . and there are people now who advocate the same principles that we do, and they are making themselves felt for they spare neither time nor money to advocate principles which they feel are truth and gospel."<sup>16</sup>

He concluded with a rhetorical question:

. . . shall we be inexcusable if we remain inactive and let others take up the work which our martyr forefathers left us to do; we are answerable. . . . Let us do what we have to do."<sup>17</sup>

#### The appeal is to join the team.

(3) **Language.** His word choice and use reflects his familiarity with biblical text, his understanding of church history, and his keen observation of nature and human nature. On Christmas Day, 1888, he spoke at the dedication of a new meetinghouse in Elkhart County (south of Elkhart). His ideal was cleanliness in God's house and purity for God's people. "I will wipe the clinging soil from my shoes as scrupulously when I enter this house, as when I am invited into the best room in your homes."<sup>18</sup> . . . "I would not spit on the floor."

His experience as a farmer and builder gave him an awareness of specifics. "The money, the lumber, the stone, the brick, all means and material needed here were dedicated before they were put into position."<sup>19</sup>

To answer his own question "Is this house dedicated?" he reached into familiar human experience to shape his answer.

It is because of the associations we have here. Here we see tears of penitence; here we see the countenances beaming with heavenly joy; here we hear God's love to man of the plan of salvation for ruined sinners; here we hear pleadings to accept a Savior's love and rest in peace with Him."<sup>20</sup>

For the individual and for the congregation his standard is high. "If you continue to use this house in the spirit of the new covenant, your house will be glorious."<sup>21</sup> In contrast he spoke against fake religion. He opposed undue formality and worldli-

ness. High society implied the opposite of honest faith and simple life. He recalled a reference to a New York society church. That reminded him of a local newspaper report: "And not like a local church that advertised in a local paper—'come to the entertainment at the church this evening. Plenty of fun and taffy'"<sup>22</sup> . . . "The heart grows sick of society."

He appealed to young people by his "cultured manner, his ease in conversation, and his polished use of the English language."<sup>23</sup>

(4) **Delivery and personality.** Coffman's delivery blended with his ethical appeal. His composition and his integrity agreed with his manner, appearance and voice. A. C. Kolb, a co-worker at the Publishing Company, wrote that Coffman was "a fluent speaker (who) had few equals."<sup>24</sup> His speaking possessed an appeal that grew out of his "charming personality . . . his dignity and grace of manner, his piercing eye, his strong face and his kindly smile." He was earnest and in his own way eloquent. His extemporaneous delivery was conversational, at times intense but not sensational. He knew that his audience would not have approved of showmanship in the pulpit and for that reason he used movement and gesture sparingly.

**Significance and Influence.** In his poem, "A Father sees his Son Nearing Manhood," Carl Sandburg caught a characterization that might well be applied to John Coffman, "Bringing change into a world resenting change."

The Christian church has been a conservator of tradition and value. When Mennonites came to America from Europe they brought with them the stories of their martyred Anabaptist leaders, fathers and mothers. They came with a desire for freedom of worship. But they also brought their German language, a conservative manner of life and dress, mutual aid and strong community life, and their practice of following traditional forms of worship. Coffman called for change, for action: preaching in English, singing schools, Sunday school, evangelism and revival meetings, mission outreach, publication, and higher education. He promoted this vision through his preaching, his itinerant evangelism and his editorials and features in the *Herald of Truth*. He

NO BUSINESS

NO WORK

IRA W. MARTIN

2112 CASSOPOLIS

ELKHART, INDIANA

"Too old to be alive, too alive to be buried"

NO TELEPHONE

NO MONEY

"Business Card" of Ira W. Martin, from the Ernest E. Miller Collection.



held series of meetings literally across the country east to west and north to south. Then at the height of his activity and influence, he seemed to shift his emphasis from evangelism to education, or as some have said, he combined promotion of education with his passion for evangelism and mission.

In his late forties his health broke. Reluctantly he resigned himself to the reality that someone else would have to carry on what he had started. He died when he was fifty. Three large funerals suggest the awareness of loss to the church and community: one in his boyhood home in Virginia, and in Elkhart, at the Mennonite Church on South Prairie Street and at the Elkhart Institute. A number of ministers spoke including Rev. Townsend representing the Elkhart Ministerial Association, the members of which attended as a body.<sup>25</sup> Some of the tributes were generous enough to say that Coffman would have been a leader in any denomination.

Coffman helped to set in motion a number of significant programs, and as some have appropriately suggested, he set the course of the Mennonite Church for the first part of the twentieth century. A careful review of his life justifies the conclusion that his speaking made a significant contribution to his leadership.

\* Address given on October 2, 1987, during the annual meeting of the Indiana Speech Association, to the sectional group, "Religious Rhetoric in Indiana."

1 James M. O'Neill, *Models of Speech Composition* (New York: Century, 1921).

2 *American College Dictionary* (New York: Harper, 1948), 760.

3 Daniel Kauffman, *Mennonite Cyclopedic Dictionary* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1937), 177.

4 M. S. Steiner, *John S. Coffman, Mennonite Evangelist* (Spring Grove, Pa.: Mennonite Book and Tract Society, 1903), 21.

5 Steiner, 22.

6 Steiner.

7 J. S. Coffman, "Evangelizing Sermon," *Herald of Truth* 29 (Mar. 1 and 15, 1892), 65-66, 85-86.

8 *Ibid.*, 85.

9 John S. Coffman, "The Spirit of Progress," *Young People's Paper* III (Feb. 29, 1896), 35; (Mar. 14, 1896), 42-43; (Mar. 28, 1896), 51.

10 Coffman, "Evangelizing Sermon," 86.

11 *Ibid.*, 85.

12 *The Herald of Truth*, "field notes," Mar. 1, 1892, presents a typical entry for this period. "He (JSC) labored one week in the Hagey district (Preston) holding meetings there and thirteen persons became willing to forsake the ways of the world and follow Christ. The following week he held meetings at Eby's church in Berlin (Kitchener), and at the end of the week between fifty and sixty persons who

had come out for Jesus made application to unite with the church."

13 "Evangelizing Sermon," 85.

14 *Ibid.*, 86.

15 *Ibid.*

16 *Ibid.*

17 *Ibid.*

18 J. S. Coffman, "A Discourse," *Herald of Truth* 26 (Jan. 15, 1889), 19.

19 *Ibid.*, 17.

20 *Ibid.*, 18.

21 *Ibid.*

22 *Ibid.*, 19.

23 John Umble, "John S. Coffman as an Evangelist," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* XXIII (July 1949), 137.

24 *Herald of Truth* XXXVI (Aug. 1, 1899), 225.

25 Barbara F. Coffman, *His Name Was John* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1964), 350.

## Niles M. Slabaugh's Ordeal in 1918

by Gerlof Homan

American Mennonites, Amish, and Hutterites were severely tried and tested during World War I when the nation was swept up in a wave of patriotic hysteria and intolerance. This was a time when lack of support or criticism of the war effort, any form of dissent, and all things German were viewed with much intolerance and suspicion. Especially Mennonites and other Anabaptist sects became objects of severe criticism and harassment. Their patriotic neighbors could not understand why many Mennonite, Amish, and Hutterite young men did not want to perform military or even non-combatant service. They were angry when they learned that Mennonites and other nonresistant groups were very reluctant to contribute to the Red Cross, purchase Liberty Bonds, or give to local war chests. Furthermore, they could not comprehend why Mennonites refused to display the flag at home or in their churches and continued to speak German or some related dialect. Because of their non-conformist stand and behavior many Mennonites, Amish, and Hutterites were harshly treated in military camps or in their local communities. In the camps many were tortured or ridiculed. Of those at home some were tarred and feathered or otherwise physically abused.

One who suffered considerable mental and physical abuse was Niles M. Slabaugh pastor of the Howard-Miami Mennonite Church (MC) located about twelve miles northeast of Kokomo, Indiana. Slabaugh was

born in 1876 and ordained in November 1904. He served his church until his death in 1961.<sup>1</sup> Much to the anger of his fellow citizens Slabaugh, like many other Mennonites, refused to contribute to the Red Cross, purchase Liberty Bonds, or contribute to war chest funds. That kind of unpatriotic behavior came to the attention of the Loyal Citizens Vigilance Committee of Miami County which decided to question Slabaugh as well as his brother-in-law, Joseph B. Martin on Monday, July 29, 1918.<sup>2</sup>

During World War I many local communities established committees to ferret out "unpatriotic" citizens and to ensure "one-hundred percent loyalty." In the summer of 1918 the Vigilance Committee of Miami County counted almost 2500 members including some of the most prominent citizens of the area. Its meetings were well attended, and on July 29, 1918, when Slabaugh and Martin were interrogated "the hall was crowded and every bit of seating capacity used."<sup>3</sup> Apparently, Slabaugh offered no resistance when they came to his home, but Martin hid in his bed where members of the Vigilance Committee found him. Later when Slabaugh was being interrogated Martin jumped up and ran away. However, he was caught and brought back. Unlike his brother-in-law, Martin finally agreed to contribute to the war chest.<sup>4</sup>

During the questioning Slabaugh acknowledged he had not contributed to the Red Cross and the local war chest fund, nor purchased savings stamps or liberty bonds. He admitted he did not want to help the country in the war effort and did not believe in killing human beings. Instead of violence, Slabaugh suggested prayer as a means of winning the war and bringing the boys home. Slabaugh's attitude provoked the anger of the Vigilance Committee as well as the local reporter of *The Peru Republican* who concluded that within a few minutes the former had demonstrated Miami County was not the place for him to live.<sup>5</sup> Yet, surprisingly, the Committee allowed Slabaugh to leave. After the ordeal of July 29 Slabaugh appealed to Aaron Loucks, chairman of the War Problems Committee of the Mennonite Church for help. In the letter below he describes his experiences of that fateful day.<sup>6</sup>



Greentown, Ind., August 9, 1918.  
 Aaron Loucks  
 Scottdale, Pa.  
 Dear Bro:

I will this evening write you in regard to the way the Miami County Ind. Vigilance Com. is doing and wondering whether it would be possible or advisable for you to bring this before the attention of Secretary Baker<sup>7</sup> at Washington with the hopes he would in some way show his disapproval of the same and also whether it would be possible to have those of our brethren who have been scared into signing the Miami War Chest to become released. A week ago from last Monday night several men came to my home and Joe Martin's home who is my brother-in-law and demanded that we go with them to Peru our county seat. We wanted to know why but they said they were U.S. Deputys [sic] and showed their Star and demanded that we go with them or they would take us by force so we went and were brought before a mob of about 700 people mostly masked who questioned us inside about an hour asking all kinds of questions regarding our stand in not supporting the war. I answered as best as I could but they just ridiculed me and finally when I refused to sign the war chest card for conscientious reasons they took me down a dark alley, shook me by the neck called me a damn S. of B. a dirty cur, said I was not even a human and threatened to take my life but I wouldn't yield so they finally in about two hours sent me home stating that I couldn't live in the county. They treated my brother-in-law similarly and finally got him to sign up just because he

was scared. Now they are taking others the same way. I am satisfied that the U.S. government is not pleased with such outlaws. Of course they then took parts of our answers and made it sound as though we were working against the U.S. Government. Please let me know what you think best regarding this.<sup>8</sup>

yours, Niles M. Slabaugh

Unfortunately, Slabaugh's troubles were not over. On Wednesday, August 14, 1918, a group of twelve individuals went to his home to punish and frighten this Mennonite pastor. This is how *The Peru Republican* describes the event of that day:

A week or more ago when Nicholas [sic] Slabaugh was arraigned before the Loyal Citizens' Vigilance Committee of Miami County he insisted he would do nothing towards helping his Uncle Samuel in winning the war from the Huns. It will be remembered he said he would let the enemy destroy his home before he would offer any physical resistance.

Slabaugh would have another story to tell had he been interviewed Thursday but the alleged slacker citizen was not to be found. The chances are he will be under cover for a while to come and thereby hangs a story.

Twelve citizens, one-hundred percent loyal, called on said Slabaugh about midnight Wednesday and putting the story as briefly as possible they acted thusly.

Slabaugh had retired as had the other members of the family. Slabaugh was taken, partly dressed about twelve miles from his home.

His head and face were shaved and a coat of yellow paint applied to his body. The manner in which the paint was used would cause one to believe it was the work of an artist and that it was a masterpiece, so skillfully was the job done.

Slabaugh threw himself on his knees and with his hands upraised begged for forgiveness and prayed aloud to be spared the punishment. Of course no attention was paid to his pleadings. The captors worked fast and like clockwork. Last seen of Slabaugh with only an old hat to cover his bald pate he was seen running down the road in the direction of his home as fast as his two legs could carry him. . . .

The identity of the masked men could not be learned other than they were loyal citizens and in no way connected with the Vigilance Committee. It appears the Vigilance Committee is not the only committee looking after Miami's loyalty.<sup>9</sup>

1 John C. Wenger, *The Mennonites in Indiana and Michigan* (Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1961), p. 326.

2 Joseph Martin was married to Slabaugh's sister Clara. Information kindly supplied by Mr. D.C. Meyers, Archivist of the Howard-Miami Mennonite Church.

3 *The Peru Republican*, July 30, 1918.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 This letter is in the papers of the War Problems Committee (now called the Peace Problems Committee), Box 1, folder 11, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana. Spelling and punctuation in this letter have not been changed. Aaron Loucks (1864-1945) was the founder of the Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania and in 1905 was largely instrumental in beginning the publication of the *Gospel Witness*. He was active in many Mennonite endeavors and during World War I chaired the War Problems Committee of the Mennonite Church. In that capacity he did an enormous amount of work for the draftees in military camps. *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Loucks, Aaron," by Paul Erb.

7 Newton D. Baker (1871-1937), Secretary of War.

8 It is not known if Loucks did write Baker, and even if he had informed the Secretary of War there was little if anything the latter could do as matters of domestic violence were outside his domain. In World War I federal authorities did little if anything to curb super-patriotic "excesses."

9 *The Peru Republican*, August 15, 1918.

## In this Issue

*This issue highlights a central concern of S. C. Yoder, President of Goshen College from 1924 to 1940, and a lifelong minister, on the inner and outer aspects of faith and life. It also notes in some detail the faith of John S. Coffman—and how he chose to communicate this faith through preaching. Coffman was a well-known evangelist and teacher in the 1880s and '90s. Yet another minister, Niles M. Slabaugh, shares some of his concerns during the height of the First World War, as he was stepping his way through the existential Mennonite questions of war and peace.*

*(Roy Umble, who wrote the article on Coffman, is Professor Emeritus of Goshen College in Speech and Drama; Gerlof Homan, who has provided the context for the Slabaugh "ordeal" is Professor of History at Illinois State University.)*

*MHB has been remiss in not publishing more book reviews during the past year. In this issue, a number of perceptive reviews by Gerald C. Studer are therefore timely.*

*And finally, the Ten-Year Index is included — which means that the Mennonite Historical Bulletin has reached its fiftieth birthday: a time for celebration! MHB heartily thanks each and every reader for faithfulness in things historical — including the financial support needed to help maintain our tradition of faith and history.*

—Leonard Gross



## Book Reviews

*Becoming Anabaptist.* By J. Denny Weaver. Scottdale, Pa./Kitchener, Ont.: Herald Press. 1987. 174 pp. \$14.95.

Professor Weaver's book is subtitled "The Origin and Significance of Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism." Weaver proves here to be a synthesizer of the enormous strides that have been taken in Anabaptist historiography since Harold S. Bender gave his classic message on *The Anabaptist Vision*, published in 1944. In this modest book, the author recounts the sixteenth-century Anabaptist origins in terms of recent findings. This endeavor proves to be much more complex and diverse than the *Anabaptist Vision* indicated. This is not at all to minimize the contribution of Bender to the opening up of Anabaptism to more serious and careful thought, but it is to recognize that this lecture stands in relation to modern understanding as a Model T Ford relates to a Ford Escort.

This book describes the several strands of the "believers' church" movement from their various origins to their demise or their consolidation into an enduring social and theological structure. The author contends here that for the most part these various movements, all considered Anabaptist, had origins independent of each other.

After an introductory chapter in which Weaver clarifies the vocabulary used in connection with Anabaptist research, or acknowledges the confusion that sometimes has arisen from it, he lays the groundwork for understanding the relevant concepts that are the trademarks of Anabaptism. He then treats in turn each of the three major varieties of early Anabaptism: the Swiss, the South German, and the Dutch. His last chapter explores the implications of this story for Mennonites and other members of the believers' church tradition in the late twentieth century and in North America.

The two things that I found most intriguing about Weaver's excellent monograph were: first, the prominent part that Karlstadt played in founding Anabaptism even prior to

the parts played by the trio generally credited with founding Anabaptism (Grebel, Blaurock and Mantz), and secondly, the perceptive proposal that Weaver advocates in his last chapter and its prospect of lifting us above the differences that bring or sustain the divisions that persist within the major strands of the Anabaptist family.

I think the designer of the book cover, Gwen M. Stamm, deserves special mention for the striking use of color and the choice of gold for the title and the lamb symbol. I further found Leonard Gross' Foreword a most fitting contribution, and Weaver's Preface a needed warning, cautioning the reader not to use Anabaptism's early diversity as an excuse for rationalizing contemporary pluralism within the believers' church family. Weaver is Professor of Religion at Bluffton College in Ohio.

—Gerald C. Studer

*History of the Conservative Mennonite Conference.* Ivan J. Miller. Grantsville, MD: Ivan J. and Della Miller. 1985. 365 pp. \$17.50.

The author was serving as conference historian when in 1960 he was asked to proceed with the planning and writing of the first Conservative Mennonite Conference history. This book was then prepared for release at the observance of the conference's seventy-fifth anniversary in 1985 during its annual sessions.

The author's preface acknowledges in the opening sentence that the Conservative Mennonite Conference is a small part of the total Mennonite family of churches in North America. When placed on a continuum from the most conservative (Old Order Amish) to the more progressive (The Mennonite Church), this conference is in-between and oriented toward the conservative left in its thought and practice (even though in this reviewer's opinion it is likely to move more and more toward the progressive right.) This seems to be indicated by the fact that the Conservative Mennonite Conference has long maintained a greater and more open relationship with the Mennonite Church than it has toward the congregationalism and isolationism of the Old Order Amish. The development chronicled here is decidedly headed in the direction of the

Mennonite Church. I got the distinct impression as I read that this conference is travelling a path very similar to that which the Mennonite Church trod a generation earlier.

It was my distinct pleasure to first become acquainted with the author, Ivan J. Miller, when he attended the Mennonite Church's General Board in its early years, during my term of service.

While the author does not claim any special training or ability for this historian's task, he exemplifies a modesty and an attempt at sympathetic objectivity seasoned with candor which is most commendable.

Miller leads up to the rise of the Conservative Mennonite Conference with four chapters covering the general Anabaptist/Mennonite background. After focusing more specifically on the early Amish Mennonite settlements in America, he speaks of the spread of the Amish Mennonites, and finally turns to the development of several Amish Mennonite conferences. These conferences did not satisfactorily provide for many congregations which were of a more conservative variety and so those in-between churches (listed in the *Mennonite Yearbook* as "Conservative Amish Mennonite") eventually (in 1910) chose to adopt this designation as their own and formed a conference.

The rise of the Conservative Mennonite Conference, as well as the subsequent growth and tensions, are told with considerable detail. Then a very long chapter gives a brief account of each congregation. The book concludes with chapters on missions abroad, publications and literature, and finally, institutions. A closing chapter (which might well have been an appendix), gives biographical sketches of the conference's ordained men. Five appendices and an index follow. This book is a significant addition to the ever growing library of American Mennonitica.

*The Dutch Dissenters.* Irvin B. Horst, ed. Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill. 1986. 233 pp. \$48 US.

This work is subtitled "A Critical Companion to Their History & Ideas" and includes a bibliographical survey of recent research pertaining to the early reformation in the



Netherlands. It is Number 13 in the *Kerkhistorische Bijdragen* and was published with financial support from the Netherlands Organization for the Advancement of Pure Research.

The editor in his introduction writes: "In Reformation research today, the study of Anabaptism is a lively pursuit." He uses the word "dissenters" specifically in reference to the Anabaptists of the early Reformation period from 1530-1565. It is also noteworthy that half of the contributors come from America, with Canada strongly in the lead.

The chapters identify and illustrate where the frontiers today are in the study of Dutch Anabaptism. Editor Horst's introduction provides a fascinating overview of the topics.

The work is in four sections with three chapters in each section. The first chapter treats eschatological themes in early Dutch Anabaptism and was written by Walter Klaassen. The second offers a "reinterpretation" of Melchior Hoffman's *Exposition* by Werner Packull (both are Canadian authors), followed by "The Struggle for an Evangelical Town" by Helmut Isaac of Paraguay.

Section two considers the rise of the Anabaptist movement and resulting societal changes (written by Lammert Jansmas of Netherlands); focuses on the civic reformer in Anabaptist Munster, Bernhard Rothmann, written by W.J. de Bakker, and ends with a chapter by John H. Yoder in French, one of the only two in a language other than English.

Section three opens with a treatment of "Anabaptism at Amsterdam after Munster" by A.F. Mellick of the Netherlands, followed by a more sympathetic discussion by James Stayer (Canada) of David Joris than one generally encounters. Finally, Hans-Jurgen Goertz of Germany contributes a chapter on the unknown Menno Simons (in German) that other scholars may feel is more of a debunking of the reformer than the facts warrant.

The final section includes an investigation pertaining to Menno Simons' printing office in Holstein, Germany by Marja Keyser, followed by a proposal by H.W. Meihuizen for a new Dutch edition of Simons' writings, and finally, an essay on Simons' theology characterized as "The Road to a Voluntary Church"

by Irvin Horst.

Two appendices follow in addition to the bibliography already mentioned. The first appendix is a survey of recent literature on the early Reformation in the Netherlands, and the second, a statement of the purposes and policy of the Committee for the Publication of Dutch Anabaptist Sources, known by the acronym CUDAN. There is also a brief note regarding each of the contributors and a good index.

*Annotated Bibliography of Mennonite Writings on War and Peace: 1930-1980.* Swartley and Dyck. Herald Press, 740 pp. \$59.95 in U.S./\$79.95 in Can.

Herald Press informs us that this book represents 17 years of research and the preface further explains that its origin lies in the request of a group of European peace workers during the later stages of the Vietnam War for such a bibliography on peace. The financial and preparatory implications of so comprehensive a work readily account for the years required to bring the work to completion.

Once the decision to produce such a work was made, many subsequent guidelines had to be developed. One was the decision to annotate each entry. Another involved the definition of what publications were to be included. Still another had to do with how long an article would have to be to be eligible for inclusion. But the most significant decisions of all had to do with choosing the date of beginning and the categories under which to organize the material. The year of 1930 was chosen, which was when the voice of Guy F. Hershberger began to be heard.

The identifying of categories to be included was a tough issue indeed. Are race relations, relief, refugee resettlement, law, social action, etc. peace issues? The editors felt the answer had to be yes. There was no question but that tax resistance, civil disobedience, labor unions, and amnesty were peace issues. The editors confess: "We increasingly found our publications moving from a simple stress on obedience to a dynamic approach of witnessing to the truth which is Jesus Christ."

Needless to say, there were many others, both individuals and historical libraries, without whose

careful help such a work as this could not have materialized. All peace-loving Christians are indebted to the several agencies and institutions who gave time and money to bring this project to completion, and most of all, to the Institute of Mennonite Studies, Elkhart, IN for bearing the greater part of the expense.

The approximately 10,000 entries included here represent the North American Mennonite writings on war and peace in the English language between 1930 and 1980. An attempt was made also to include articles written by Mennonites published in non-Mennonite publications. Also included are those articles written by non-Mennonite authors when they have been published in Mennonite publications.

No claim is made to full comprehensiveness though that was an ideal that the editors strove for. Admittedly, for example, some peace-theme novels, even if written by Mennonites, were likely overlooked, and no attempt was made to include audio-visuals. As the work progressed, the inclusiveness of the peace theme continued to broaden so that abortion and environmental issues receive some attention as well. Since many of the topics are inter-related, some annotations appear under more than one heading if it speaks directly to the topic concerned.

The annotations are skillful summaries and the typesize is all that one can expect in a volume of this magnitude. There is an appendix that supplements the bibliography regarding those items that were missed in the computer calls; also an author index. The arrangement of the book provides a topical index so it has the features of accessibility that one should expect in a major study resource.

*The Plain People.* Linda L. Boynton. Salem, WI: Sheffield Publishing Company. 1986. \$10.95. 222 pp.

This book is subtitled "An Ethnography of the Holdeman Mennonites" and describes the culture of the Holdeman congregation in Glenn County, PA. The author obviously won the confidence of her subjects by her tact, patience and sympathy with the integrity of their purposes. Her first-hand obser-



ventions were made and interviews held over a period of three years.

The book is illustrated with pencil drawings. The text was composed on a word processor and printed on a dot-matrix printer. There is a brief bibliography and no index.

While the descriptions and interpretations are generally accurate, the author's understanding of the Holdeman movement's place in the broader Mennonite picture is quite inadequate.

*An Annotated Bibliography of Mennonite Hymnals and Songbooks, 1742-1986.* Martin E. Ressler. 117 pp. \$14.00 plus \$2.00 p. & h. from Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, 2215 Millstream Rd., Lancaster, PA. 17604.

As Amos B. Hoover fittingly says "In Memory": "Martin E. Ressler spent the greater part of his life understanding and interpreting church music and its history." He did this by teaching music widely and editing a bimonthly publication called *Music Messenger* from 1967-79.

In connection with his music practice and interest, Ressler gathered, catalogued, and here annotated one of the finest private collection of hymnals and songbooks. This collection is especially strong on Mennonite and Brethren hymnals. It is not surprising then that the author attempts to give a comprehensive listing of the Mennonite Church's American-published hymnals and songbooks, to which he has added those of the related groups called Old Order, Beachy Amish, Reformed Mennonite, and Church of God in Christ Mennonite.

This book was published posthumously--Mr. Ressler died on Oct. 10, 1987. Some of the final editing he did during what proved to be his last illness and this may account for some of the errors and omissions that I found in a random check. Also there are typographical errors such as misspellings, incomplete underlinings, etc.

What I did in examining this book was to compare its listing with the modest collection of hymnals and songbooks that I have gathered as a part of my personal collection of

Anabaptist and Mennonite books. For example, the author lists a page in the *Church and Sunday School Hymnal* as 102 when I found it to be 388. In fact it would seem to have been wiser to stay with the number of hymns rather than pages, since the first is numbered while the second in this case was not. In another 1902 copy of this same hymnal, I found a *Deutscher Anhang* of 100 German hymns while he lists this book as being known only to have a grouping of fifty. Again, in connection with his listing of C. F. Derstine's *Sheet Music of Heaven*, he notes one known Scottdale reprint as dated 1926 while my copy is 1925. These illustrate the kind of errors I found troublesome in a bibliography that calls for particular care in description or annotation.

Aside from these technical errors, whether by the author or the typesetter, this book is a welcome and valuable resource in the study of Mennonite hymnology and stands as a legacy of one who gave himself unstintingly to the music of his church.

*I'll See You Again!* Myron S. Augsburg. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1989. 232 pp. \$7.95.

It is seldom that novels are reviewed in these columns. Indeed it is seldom that your reviewer ever reads novels, much less reviews them. It may be likely that most readers of this bulletin are, like this reviewer, addicted to documentary evidence with little or no embellishment. But this is a worthy exception for several reasons. First, this is of the genre called historical novels which means that it is fact-based. The author says in his Preface that except for "the first three chapters...the remaining chapters are supported by careful historical research."

Secondly, the author is a competent historical researcher as well as a widely known evangelist, former college president, and church-planter. He has honed his communication skills to a commendable edge, unlike many of his history and research oriented fellows.

Thirdly, Felix Manz who is the central character of this story, is one of the few more prominent Swiss reform leaders that made a very notable contribution to the

emergence of Anabaptism. In fact, Manz is one of the triumvirate widely held to be the founders of Anabaptism, Conrad Grebel and George Blaurock being the other two. Augsburg represents Manz as believing that Reublin shared this prominence also, though the reason for this judgment is not provided here. Manz is presented as giving his leadership in the radical reform priority over his supposed love-affair with Trini Hottinger. This imagined difficult decision is reminiscent of some comments made by the Apostle Paul regarding his marital status.

Manz' early close relationship to Zwingli is seen gradually eroding as the story unfolds. The primacy given to itinerant witness to a newfound faith in spite of the rapidly growing civil and ecclesiastical opposition is vividly reflected here and should help readers understand the tension that always underlies the choice of ultimate allegiance.

There are times when the author seems to underdraw the drama of the encounters and public debates that characterized the movement's rapid spread. On the other hand, the author does incorporate some of the subtleties that must have been a part of the electric mix of the times, such as the controversial spiritualism of Denk and Hut or the temptation to embellish the stories of martyrdom or escape that circulated among the sympathizers with the Anabaptists. However, nothing is said about how it was that so many of the people could have given prime time presumably away from their vocations to hear the new message. Nothing is said either about the water in the moat into which some early Anabaptists dropped when they escaped from prison. These illustrate the fact that the full context a reader would expect is missing in some episodes.

Nevertheless this book, as with Augsburg's earlier book *Pilgrim Aflame*, now also a movie, *The Radicals*, provides much of the romance, intrigue, danger, doctrinal understanding, vigorous evangelizing, and high drama that characterized this virile movement, and provides it in a manner that will appeal to a far wider audience than formal history could ever be expected to attract.

—Gerald C. Studer



# Mennonite Historical Bulletin

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J. Kevin Miller

Explanation: Authors and subjects are listed alphabetically in boldface print, followed by the title of the pertinent article or feature. The title of the article is followed by the name of the author, volume number, issue number, page, and date of issue in that order, except that the author's name is not repeated if it happens to be the index entry. Research news and notes and recent publications occur throughout the issues and are indicated in the index in one entry, "News and notes. *Passim*," and "Recent Publications. *Passim*." Book reviews have been grouped under the entry "Books reviewed." The word "Reviews" after an author's name locates book reviews by this person. Abbreviations used: Ja--January; Ap--April; Jl--July; O--October.

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Anna Hoover Bollman, One Hundred Years Old. Leonard Gross. XLVI:2:1-4 Ap 1985.  
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Abrahams, Ethel Ewert and David A. Haury. *A Guide to the Art Collection of the Mennonite Library and Archives*. Gerald C. Studer. XLV:4:7-8 O 1984.

Arnold, Annemarie. *Youth Movement to Bruderhof*. Gerald C. Studer. L:2:7-8 Ap 1989.

Arnold, Eberhard. *The Early Christians*. Gerald C. Studer. XLII:2:7 Ap 1981.

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